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EDITORIAL

The Tragic Story of the Success of the Spanish Tyranny in Wiping Out Protestantism in Flanders in the sixteenth century is well-known. Not so well-known is the fact that the Mennonites were in the forefront of the Protestant movement here as in Holland, and paid the highest price of suffering and martyrdom. Dutch Mennonite scholars have written much and well about the history of the Mennonites in their own country, but have almost totally neglected the story of Flemish Mennonitism. It has remained for a young contemporary Flemish historian, Dr. A. L. E. Verheyden, teacher in the Gymnasium at Vilwoorde near Brussels, to prepare the first complete and scholarly account of this great movement in Flemish Church history. His extensive manuscript, now in the hands of the editors of the Review, deserves to be published soon, both in the original Flemish and in an English translation. The introductory chapter of this manuscript is published herewith as a brief general summary and characterization of Flemish Mennonitism. It can be readily seen from this chapter that the Flemish movement was essentially the same as that in Holland, Germany and Switzerland, evangelical, peaceful, thoroughgoing, Biblical. An evaluation of four briefer studies of Mennonites in Flanders published in the past few years by Dr. Verheyden is presented in the book review section of this issue from the pen of the leading Dutch Mennonite historian, Ds. N. van der Zijpp of Rotterdam.

From the Recently Written Thorough and Scholarly History of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America, a Yale doctoral dissertation by S. F. Pannabecker, the Review is happy to bring the extensive monograph on the history of the Swiss Mennonite settlements of the nineteenth century in Ohio and Indiana which appears in this issue. Dr. Pannabecker's study traces not only the external history of the settlements but their gradual transition from an original ultraconservative character to a more progressive and liberal point of view in certain aspects of custom and practice while retaining a fundamentally conservative theological position. This is the first comprehensive and scholarly study of the Swiss group in America. Readers will be interested in the complete book by Dr. Pannabecker, which when it is published will be an outstanding contribution to American Mennonite historiography.

For Some Reason Which Is Not Readily Discernible the Mennonites of Russia have been far more fruitful in literary production than the Mennonites of any other nationality. It would be more accurate in this connection to speak of Mennonites *from* Russia inasmuch as the novelists and poets who have been active in the past and present generations are the émigré Mennonites who have fled from Russia since 1920, and who have done their writing in Germany, Canada and the United States. The large and well-rooted Mennonite communities of the United States, some of them in existence now for a quarter of a millennium, have produced exactly nothing in the field of *belles lettres* worthy of the name, at least not using Mennonite material. Others have written about them, but not they about themselves. By contrast the Russian group has recently produced richly, even though not much of it is of first quality. Writers like Hans Harder and Peter Epp, whose novels are discussed in this issue, are good writers and deserve serious attention. Unfortunately neither they nor any other modern Mennonite writers have yet succeeded in penetrating deeply into the Mennonite soul and producing a thoroughly Mennonite novel in which the major themes and problems of Mennonite faith and life are used. The Review hopes to continue the presentation of similar studies in Mennonite literature until the entire field is covered.

In the Two Final Brief Studies of This Issue John C. Wenger Continues His translations of Anabaptist tracts, and Leonard Verduin discloses the discovery of what is undoubtedly the most authentic version of Obbe Philips' so-called "Confession."

The Mennonite Quarterly Review

Vol. XXI No. 2

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE MENNONITES IN FLANDERS*

Dr. A. L. E. Verheyden, Vilwoorde, Belgium

To seek to evoke a perfect image of the significance which Mennonitism attained in the earldom of Flanders during the agitated century of the Reformation seems to me to be a completely illusory enterprise. Powerful manifestations of a sharply resisting Mennonitism reveal themselves often, now in this, now in that town. Upon investigation however, the church historian soon discovers to his disappointment, that apart from the confirmation of a strong vitality of the brotherhood under study, he scarcely has any opportunity to penetrate into the real internal life of the church. Historical research of many years has demonstrated why there will perhaps never be an opportunity to demolish entirely this bulwark of mystery.

In the first place, time has made sad havoc with the surviving archival sources. Reports of court testimony and trials—the most essential sources—reveal irreparable gaps for the sixteenth century. It is purely a stop-gap method to fill the gaps with data of the chroniclers unless they are supported by more neutral sources. In particular must we shun the use of quotations from the chronicles alone, although it is sometimes a necessary evil, in the discussion of the history of the Mennonites in the South Netherlands, since the

* The first chapter of the author's "History of the Mennonites in Flanders," now in manuscript, soon to be published. Translated from the Flemish.

authors are either Roman Catholic or Calvinistic, and *ipso facto* can never be acquitted of prejudice in their writings when they treat of Mennonitism.

A still more dangerous stumbling-block is the supernatural courage with which the Mennonites answered their examining judges. The best-read as well as the least-read Mennonite under trial answers fervently the questions of his judges when he has to defend the doctrine, but he is silent whenever he is sounded out about the organization of the group to which he belongs or about his fellow-believers in other places. The most inhuman practices never succeeded in getting the tortured victim to disclose the name or the residence of his brethren or sisters who were still at liberty, and certainly not the residence of the leaders. In cases when the one on trial does give exact indications, one discovers soon that the persons mentioned are either already dead or that they are out of range at the moment of the disclosure. The rare exceptions to this general rule result from the confessions of those who gave way under the menace of peril or death, or from the stories of children who responded without suspicion to the catch questions of trained questioners. However, these cases do not occur often.

In the light of this it is not surprising therefore that thus far K. Vos was the only historian to undertake the study of a congregation in the South Netherlands, namely the congregation at Antwerp. Neither this last fact, nor the former considerations, however, justify the lack of interest in the study of Mennonitism in Flanders where this religion attained such a great prominence. Even if the possibility of being absolutely complete is beyond reach, one can never forget that as long as Flemish Mennonitism is so poorly known, a very important aspect of the Reformation in South Netherlands is left untreated. If we take into consideration the fact that the Mennonites produced nearly three quarters of the total number of Flemish martyrs and continued the struggle against the Habsburg authority for a century, then we insult logic by writing the history of the Reformation without giving a large space to Mennonitism alongside of Calvinism and Lutheranism.[1]

In order to make this last possible, we have written this monograph on Menno's disciples in the earldom of Flanders. We are aware that actually it has turned out to be no more than a "sketch" of the indefatigable activity of the Mennonites on our Flemish soil.

[1] K. Vos, "Doopsgezinden te Antwerpen," in B.C.R.H., Vol. LXXXIV, p. 328.

It must be noted in advance that the historiography of the Mennonite movement will follow quite different lines depending on whether it is directed to the North Netherlands or to the South Netherlands. It will not do, for example, to use Kühler's classification of the history of the Mennonites of the North Netherlands for Flanders. The North Dutch brotherhood, according to this church historian, from its rise till 1581 lived in a period of persecution by the state. Until 1554, however, this persecution was not of the sort to prevent the establishment of congregations, nor, after 1554, participation in great debates, which led, disappointingly enough, to numerous schisms. After 1581—the year in which the Reformed faith was elevated to the position of a state religion—the brotherhood entered a new contest with the proponents of the other reformation churches in order to be recognized by them. This was, in effect, attained in 1672. Then the internal reconstruction was started, which led to the foundation of the "Algemeene Doopsgezinde Societeit" in 1811.[2] Thus Kühler outlines Mennonite history in Holland.

It is unthinkable to use the same chronological division entirely or even partially for the history of the Flemish Mennonites. In the first place, after 1640, Mennonitism in our country showed scarcely any sign of life. Moreover, during the entire time of its existence this faith had never received recognition as a religious movement. For the Flemish followers of Menno Simons it was "a century of conflict." It is true however that this struggle was not always equally intense. The fluctuations in the persecuting zeal of their opponents are the only milestones in the always agitated years of the existence of the Flemish Mennonites.

Originating about 1530, this movement by 1550 had reached most of the centres of the country, certainly the largest ones. In this period the repression of heresy had not yet reached its height; consequently the scattered executions were unable to prevent a considerable expansion. In 1550, however, came the signal for an incredibly bloody oppression: mass arrests occurred all over the country; many Mennonites were executed, and others were exiled for life. This storm of persecution did not decrease until 1576, the moment at which the rise of Calvinism became more and more clear. The period of 1576-1586, which was until 1584 the golden age for the Calvinists, eliminated the fear of death but did not bring the recognition for which they longed so very much. After 1586 the persecution flared up again. In this year Alexander Farnese ini-

2 Dr. W. J. Kühler, *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, 1917, 1-8.

tiated a real hunt for the leading figures of the brotherhood, who were mercilessly condemned to death, while the ordinary members were expelled from the earldom. The years 1586-1640 were the period of the utmost obstinate resistance of the last Mennonite families who sought to be worthy of the honorable tradition of their ancestors. But it was an unequal fight. A gradual emigration to the North Netherlands took place, which became an accomplished fact by about 1640.

Since logically our discussion has had to refer to Menno's doctrines, we consider it necessary to write about the doctrines which held the chief place in the faith of the Flemish Mennonites.

The feeling of sharing a common lot, based upon and purified by incessant persecution, explains why the Mennonites of the South Netherlands remained indivisible in doctrine. Here the church was always first, and the individual achievements were secondary.[3] The doctrine of Menno Simons, as this Frisian elder proclaimed it at the beginning of his career, was maintained by the Flemish brotherhood to the end. Only seldom did the Mennonites of the South Netherlands experience divergence in doctrine, and when there were some who ventured it, their success was not significant. Nowhere were there completed divisions; never was the individual to hold his own against the church.

The actual basis of the Mennonite faith is the rejection of the sacraments. What distinguishes the Mennonites theologically from the other reformed groups, is their conception of baptism and the Lord's Supper. These doctrines were perfectly explained by Menno Simons in his *Foundation (Fundament des Christelycken leers)* (1539). For him and thus also for his Flemish followers, baptism is only a sign. First the inner struggle with the devil must be won and the full surrender to God achieved; only then can baptism be considered. The administering of baptism is thus in fact the crown for the victory gained over the sinful world. The baptism of adults, fundamental to the Mennonite faith, counts only as an external

[3] Already in 1856 H. Q. Jansen wrote in his *Kerkhervorming te Brugge* (Arnhem, 1868), I, p. ix, "I trust that the inclusion of the Mennonites in my history of the reformation of the church will not meet with disapproval. They take up a so large and at the same time so distinctive a place in the field of the reformation that only narrow-mindedness can overlook them; and this disregard can only mean a large loss for historical science." Gustave Bossert also criticized the lack of interest in the history of the Mennonites. What he declared in 1930 concerning the Mennonites of Württemberg can be applied just as well to the historiography of Flemish Mennonitism: "The Mennonites have not only been stepchildren of the reformation, but also of research. Our knowledge of their world of ideas was poor, our acquaintance with the Mennonite congregations and the spread of the movement was defective, in fact almost a matter of chance. Consequently the judgments as to their significance as well as the content of their faith were uncertain and superficial, not far removed from prejudice". (*Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer,* Vol. I, p. v.)

sign and therefore dare not have sacramental character in any respect.

Reception into the brotherhood demands from the convert an exemplary life, a thorough knowledge of the doctrines, and a total surrender to God. When he expresses the wish to be considered for baptism, he knows that he will be submitted to a thorough examination of his faith at the next visit of and in the presence of the bishop (the minister who has the authority to baptise), and it need not surprise him at all if his request brings no result at first.

It is worthy of note that the Mennonites did not make it easy to join their group, in spite of the severe persecutions and the infrequent visits to the Flemish area of those who were authorized to baptise. A few typical cases will suffice to illustrate this aspect of Mennonitism.

In 1550 a Mennonite youth (his name is unknown) gave the following answer to the question asked him by the examining magistrates as to why he was not yet baptized: "Sirs, when the minister questioned me about the faith, he discovered that I was still young in mind, so he ordered me to search the Scriptures further. But I then wished that it would occur at once. Then he asked me if I knew that the world would put to death and burn such people. I said, 'I know.' Then he said unto me, 'So I ask you to have patience in this until I come back at another time'."[4] Diedrick Lambrechts, also not baptized, gave the still more pithy answer (August 22, 1562), "that one cannot receive baptism, since we consider that one has to reform his life beforehand."[5] The constables were still more astonished by the way in which Pieter Aelbrechts answered in 1568 when they asked him if he would still take the rebaptism if he were freed. Unreservedly the Ghent martyr declared, "Yes, I would, if I were qualified for it."[6]

It is impossible to delimit the length of the period of preparation for baptism more closely. It is logical that this varied for every candidate. One must also consider that there were among the brethren and sisters many who did not even possess the primary abilities of reading and writing. It is difficult to imagine the effort applied by these simple workers to the task of making themselves familiar by their limited means with such a high world view. That their efforts were successful has been proved abundantly by the records

[4] Van Braght, *Het Bloedig Tooneel of Martelaers Spiegel der Doopsgezinde of Weerloose Christenen,* (Amsterdam, 1685), II, 94-95.

[5] *Stadsarchief Gent, Bouc van den Crime,* 1561-1563, fol. 283.

[6] Van Braght, *op. cit.,* II, 369.

of the examinations of those who were tortured.[7] A simple workman was not seldom able to hold his own in the defense of the doctrine. This presupposes unquestionably no meagre intellectual maturity. Since the high demands which the bishop and the congregation made of the candidate-convert must have meant besides a thorough purification of life also a raising of the intellectual level in a certain sense, it is no wonder that some of the candidates for adult baptism had to wait for several years. A few typical cases may serve to illustrate this.

Francois van der Leyen, burned at the stake at Ghent, April 28, 1558, expressed his regret during the trial that although he had been present at the meetings faithfully for three years he never had been able to get so far as to deserve consideration for baptism.[8] Baerbele Pieters had to wait for three years before she was received as a sister in the congregation.[9] It was still worse with Jossyne Swynts. She had never missed the Mennonite meetings and she had endeavored to make the doctrine of Menno Simons her own. She had pressed several times to take her place as a real member of the brotherhood. In spite of all her good intentions she had to wait not less than seven years before she could receive baptism.[10]

The matter of baptism was naturally always the first point which was discussed during the trials of the arrested Mennonites. Nearly all the accused use the same wording in their defense, approximately as follows:

1. That the infant baptism which is used in the Roman Catholic Church is useless and worthless;

2. That one can be baptized only when one believes and has the understanding;

3. That one does not get salvation by baptism but that this is only the sign of obedience and of a good conscience;

4. Also that little children dying without baptism are nevertheless saved.[11]

Few particulars are known about the form of the ceremony of baptism itself, although it is assumed rather generally that it was done by sprinkling. The details of the practice in the South have remained a total mystery to us, and we had assumed without

[7] Brother Cornelis (an opponent of the Mennonites at Bruges) considered it the work of the devil that the Mennonites who could formerly not distinguish an "a" from a "b", at their baptism suddenly knew how to read and to write. (Dr. W. J. Kühler, *op. cit.*, 292)

[8] Stadsarchief Gent, *Bouc van den Crime*, 1585-1561, fol. 58-v.

[9] *Ibid.*, 1574-1578, fol. 136-137.

[10] Stadsarchief Gent, *Keure Resolutien*, 1585-1605, fol. 172v-173.

[11] Stadsarchief Gent, *Bouc van den Crime*, 1555-1561, fol. 193v.

documentary confirmation that it was done here just as in the North. The discovery of the record of the trial of Godevaert Jasperssoone, who knew our regions thoroughly, has given us the desired clarification. He describes the ceremony as follows: "One takes a dish with water, in which the minister puts his hand and then drops water upon the head of the recipient in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost upon the basis of the faith that he, the recipient, has in this baptism.[12]

Less in detail, but probably in agreement with the declaration of Jasperssoone, is the assertion of the twelve year old son of Jan van der Veste. The boy innocently informed the inquisitors that he had once heard his father say that his older brother and his sister were not baptized "neither in the church (that is, a Roman Catholic Church), nor in a brook."[13]

As regards the meaning which has been attached to the institution of the Lord's Supper, all Mennonites give a clear testimony. All sacramental character is denied to the Supper. "It is a sign in the first place of the love of God in Christ, consequently of the unity of the believers, finally of their spiritual fellowship with the body of Christ and His death."[14] The Flemish Mennonites use sharp language to deny to the Supper all sacramental meaning. They all assert with emphasis: "That Christ is not verily in flesh and blood in the holy sacrament of the altar or consecrated host in the mass, but that this is an idol and the mass an abomination or a disgusting thing before God and that one commits idolatry when one listens to the mass or adores the sacrament of the altar."[15] To the question: "About the sacraments of the priests, do you not believe that flesh and blood is there and that it is God?", Hans Buefkin answered rather rudely: "No, Sirs, I do not believe this. What! should that be flesh and blood and God? Cover this table with them, I will blow them away so that they fly about, Gods are not thus. One cannot handle God nor eat Him bodily."[16]

Adult baptism and the conception of the Supper brought the final rupture both with the Catholics and with the other reformation groups. The other points of the Mennonite faith, however characteristic they were for the faith, only made the existing rupture deeper. For the sake of completeness and clearness, however, we give here a brief review of the remaining articles of faith.

12 Rijksarchief Brussel, *Etat et Audience,* No. 509, fol. 125v.

13 Stadsarchief Brugge, *Bouc van den Steene,* 1558-1559, fol. 89.

14 W. J. Kühler, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Doopsgezinden in de zestiende eeuw,* (Haarlem, 1932), 235.

15 Stadsarchief Gent, *Bouc van den Crime,* 1561-1563, fol. 29.

16 Van Braght, *op. cit.,* II, 94-95.

In the course of the sixteenth century much debate in Mennonite doctrinal thinking was occasioned by the discussions about the nature of Christ. For the Mennonites it was impossible to conceive that Christ bore in himself anything of the purely human sinful nature, since His death on the cross would then not have been able to blot out the sins of the world. Upon this basis the Mennonites did not admit that Jesus could have received His flesh from Mary.[17] The Flemish Mennonites, in this point faithful to the guidance of their teacher Menno Simons, restricted themselves to this general view and except for some rare exceptions refrained from going on into possible theological fine points on this subject. Our investigation in the archives of Brussels, Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent and Courtrai brought us always to the conclusion that the followers of Menno in South Netherlands in general defended the following conception against their opponents: that Christ was born "out of" the virgin Mary who remained virgin, but not "of" Mary. This means that Christ did not receive His human nature and being from the mere body of this virgin Mary, just as the Scriptures deny, but He descended from above by the power of the Holy Spirit into the virgin.[18]

What K. Vos has reported about the doctrinal deviations, bears out our conviction that they may be considered as so many—however few in number—sterile outgrowths.[19] In this connection the Flemish Mennonites scarcely went beyond the orthodoxy of their teacher in their conception of the trinity. Moreover it is

[17] Melchior Hofman, following in this point the spokesmen of the *devotio moderna,* described his conception in the following metaphor: "Like the heavenly dew falls into the shell of a mussel and changes there into a pearl without taking over anything from the shell, so the Holy Ghost, the Word of God, fell into Mary's womb and there of itself became the spiritual pearl Jesus Christ." *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica* ('s Gravenhage, 1908), I, 311.

[18] Rijksarchief Brussel, *Etat et Audience,* No. 509, fol. 124v-125.

[19] This is what the church historian Vos reports about this subject (*Doopsgezinden te Antwerpen,* 319-320): "Regarding the liberal tendencies: the unitarian ideas of Adam Pastor, formerly a co-worker of Menno who had been excommunicated at the conference of Goch by Menno and Dirk Philips, were shared by some persons. The report of the trial of Herman van Vlekwijk, which can be found among others in Van Braght and which is derived from the sermons of Brother Cornelis, indicates that this martyr was a unitarian. It is true that nothing of this can be found in the trial record of which we have a copy in our archives at Amsterdam, but this record is certainly not complete. The well-informed Hans Alenson is the decisive authority in this matter according to my view; he reports that Herman was a follower of Adam Pastor. It is also evident that not all Flemish Mennonites embraced the teaching of the incarnation of Christ as this was taken over by Menno from Hofman. At any rate, the same Alenson claims to possess a letter of the well-known martyr Hans Bret, the friend of Hans de Ries, which letter proves that Bret had other thoughts concerning this doctrine and that he had often disputed this question with his co-prisoner Jan de Vlascoper. The Flemish martyr Jacques d'Auchy, who was executed in Leeuwarden, likewise held a different attitude on the incarnation. Also Jacob van der Wege, who was burned in 1573 at Ghent, professes something different about this from what was taught by Menno."

noteworthy that this article of faith did not interest them so much and when they were questioned about it, they kept to generalities.

Still less clearly did they develop their conception of the resurrection of the dead at the return of Jesus Christ on earth. According to the Flemish Mennonites neither purgatory nor heaven is the dwelling place for the souls of the departed; they go and await the redeeming hour of the Last Judgment. They never hesitated to insist with emphasis in the presence of the inquisitors that not a single saint, not even Mary, remained in Heaven, but just like ordinary mortals has to await the return of the Saviour. Prayers, masses, good works, nothing could change this divine decision. The fact moreover that they considered confession, adoration of saints, fasting and the authority of the Pope, to be not in accord with the requirements of the Bible, certainly needs no further demonstration.

The refusal to swear oaths, the retention of non-resistance, and the use of the ban (excommunication) are also considered to be typical Mennonite practices.

There is agreement among all Mennonites about the swearing of the oath, testifying "that it is not allowed to swear or to take the oath even if one has been compelled by the court to give witness to the truth." Since civil and political life necessitated the swearing of the oath, the Mennonites were constantly in danger. In their insistence on living according to the spirit of the Gospel at any price they inevitably walked into the trap at their first examination: their refusal betrayed immediately their belief and was practically equivalent to the signature of their death sentence. In this way, as will be seen later, many a Mennonite fell into the hands of the magistrate.

The Flemish followers of Menno seldom expressed themselves about the principle of non-resistance, a principle which did not achieve full recognition until the second half of the sixteenth century. It has been proved, indeed, that the brotherhood remained entirely neutral—it was moreover a voluntary neutrality—toward every manifestation of worldly power or use of weapons. (For a detailed statement on this we refer the reader to our main discussion, especially to the treatment of the attitude of the Mennonites during the well-known iconoclasm.) Incidentally, it can be stressed that, in contrast to the use of force at the Calvinistic hedge-sermon meetings, the Mennonite meetings were held without the aid of armed fellow-believers. After the restoration of Spanish absolutism, which heralded the triumphant return of Catholicism, there were in Ghent and

Bruges[20] several cases of Mennonites who refused to serve in the civic guard. They had succeeded for a considerable time in avoiding this difficulty by asking other civilians who did not belong to the brotherhood, to take their place in the civic guard for financial remuneration. These substitutes performed their service in the guard.

Except for the doctrine of the incarnation and the conception of the trinity, the doctrines of faith discussed up to this point did not cause any serious disputes. This cannot be claimed, at least not for the North Netherlands, in respect to the question of the ban.

With great care the Mennonites sought to establish and maintain the church without "spot or wrinkle."[21] Immediately, however, the question arose as to who would be charged with discipline—the congregation or the elders (leaders of the general brotherhood). The North and the South Netherlands solved this problem, each in its own distinct way. The brotherhood of the North Netherlands was soon divided under the influence of the individualism of the elders who were eager for leadership; this mania for division continued in fact far into the seventeenth century. The greater freedom of movement with which the Mennonites there could spread their faith was certainly not without effect. Debates could be planned unhindered, with the consequent regrettable train of divisions, a fertile subject for many writers of pamphlets in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The South however, where the repression was maintained with the exception of some short periods of peace saw the Mennonites rallying anxiously around the church and expecting from it the greatest blessing. The brethren were often thrown on their own resources, since they were frequently deprived of their leaders and, after the travels of Leenaart Bouwens (1554-1556, 1557-1561, 1563-1565) were only rarely visited by ministers from the North Netherlands. Consequently it is very natural that the church assumed the authority to remove undesirable elements. In any case united deliberation about certain cases necessarily diminished in actual practice the chances for inconsiderate decrees of excom-

[20] E. J. Strubbe, *Het verval van het Protestantisme te Brugge na* 1584 (S. E. B., jaargang 1924), 18, note 5.
Stadsarchief Gent, *Bouc van den Crime,* 1581-1594, fol. 52-52v.

[21] The fundamentals of the "blameless church which is without spot or wrinkle", can be summarized as follows according to the spirit of Menno Simons (K. Vos, *Menno Simons,* p. 195):
1. Holding fast to the unadulterated teaching and the acceptance of the ministers ordained by God; 2. scriptural observance of the sacraments; 3. brotherly love; 4. keeping the commandments of God; 5. bearing suffering and persecution for Christ's sake; 6. open confession of God and Christ.

munication. The Flemish Mennonites kept themselves in this respect faithfully to the directives given by Menno in his *Lieffelijcke Vermaninge* (Loving Admonition), which was published as early as 1541. Only when the guilty brother or sister persisted in his wickedness did the congregation have to interfere; until that point no opportunity was overlooked to restore the erring to the right path. This spirit, which was dissipated in the North under the pressure of particularistic animosities, persisted undiminished in the South.

The first testimony about this dates from 1551. Hans van Overdam indicated very clearly the road they had to go. "You must," he declared, "go to them (viz. the erring ones) and rebuke them, and when they do not want to hear this you must bring them before the church and rebuke them in public. If they do not hearken then, then put them out of church and treat them as gentiles and public sinners." Admonition from man to man, handling the case within the church and only then expulsion, this was the way in which the weapon of excommunication was used in the South. They considered as "a wrinkle or spot" those who committed theft, lying (this was considered as a serious delinquency), adultery or other acts contrary to the general Christian teaching.

Jacob de Rore, one of the most influential leaders of the second half of the sixteenth century, expressed himself frequently in the same spirit in his extant correspondence. In one of his letters, addressed to the Mennonite Pauwels van Meenen who had inquired of him concerning the question of shunning, he touched a thorny aspect of the life of the congregations. De Rore gives plainly his judgment about the attitude which the brethren should take toward fellow-believers who maintained contact with the erring ones. Even here he urged caution and asked them not to consider the delinquent from the beginning as an enemy "but to admonish him as a brother, for the admonition serves to improvement, likewise the shunning and the excommunication serve to improvement."[22] Thus tolerance became the principal characteristic of the Mennonitism of the South Netherlands; yet this prudent wielding of the weapon of excommunication never degenerated into a humiliating laxity.

Of Jan Dhauwere it was said in 1559; "that they (i.e., the brethren) avoided him because he still frequented the taverns.[23]

[22] Jacob de Rore, *Lieflijcke brieven* (edition of 1584, fol. Ji,v.) Herman de Timmerman also stood energetically in the breach for the mild application of excommunication in a well-written pamphlet (K. Vos, *op. cit.*, 329). Vos also treats this martyr in his *Menno Simons* (Leiden, 1914), 147-149.

[23] Stadsarchief Gent, *Bouc van den Crime,* 1555-1561, fol. 100v.

The history of Petronelle van de Velde, who fell into the hands of the tribunal of Ghent in 1563, presents a typical case. This woman really went too far; illegitimate children to the number of five, the use of dishonest means to get into the possession of money, a veritable mania for lies, regular lawsuits, this all had to be put to her charge at the moment when she expressed the wish to be admitted to the circle of emigré Flemish Mennonites in London. Well, Lowys "from Flanders" admittèd her in spite of all these abuses. Before this the Flemish leader had brought her before the brotherhood and he had compelled her to confess in public real penitence and to promise that she would show herself worthy of the baptism she received. Her behavior was for some time blameless, for after her return to Flanders her marriage with Antheunis van Steen at Ghent was consecrated by no less than the famous Flemish Elder, Hans Busschaert, called the Weaver. When, however, a short time thereafter she again gave evidence of yielding to worldly temptations, the injured congregation acted boldly. After deliberation she was excommunicated from the congregation and her marriage was declared annulled.[24]

The affair of Fierin Grysperre provides a vivid testimony of the authority with which the congregation was invested in respect to the pronouncing of excommunication. This time the question was not about someone who had abandoned himself to worldly practices. On the contrary, he was one of the ministers of the congregation of Ghent. After personal study he had come to conclusions which were not completely in accord with the teaching of Menno. Approached immediately about this matter, he obstinately maintained his point of view. Evidently he was summoned thereupon before a wider circle, without achieving a satisfactory result. On the ground of the fact that the accused would not resign, he was expelled from the brotherhood. Fierin Grysperre appealed thereupon to the full congregation. He expressed himself as follows: "Because he was not excommunicated by *all* brethren and sisters of the congregation, he gave them to understand that he would prove that he had to be heard before *all* the brethren and sisters; since he was only excommunicated by *some* of them and not in the presence of *all* of the brethren."[25] The final decision, according to this testimony of 1582, belongs most positively to the congregation.

[24] Stadsarchief Gent, *Bouc van den Crime,* 1563-1565, fol. 47-55, 172, 284-285.

[25] Stadsarchief Gent, *Bouc van den Crime,* 1581-1583, fol. 172.

In the light of this, the significance of the Mennonite conference which took place in August, 1567, in Antwerp, can better be grasped. This meeting (where not only Mennonites of Antwerp were present) had been arranged especially to consider the question as to who among the fellow-believers could no longer be tolerated because of persistence in a licentious life.[26]

The weapon of excommunication, exercised by the whole Brotherhood, can consequently, for the South, not be considered an evil. The Flemish Mennonite always preferred tolerance without laxity, and only undertook the expulsion of hardened "sinners."

For these reasons we cannot follow Dr. W. J. Kühler in concluding on the basis of the attitude of Hans de Ries and Charles de Nielles, that the South Netherlands followed the North on the road of divisions. Moreover, both of the testimonies quoted come from the midst of the Antwerp Mennonite circles. Apart from the fact that the metropolis was influenced more by spokesmen from the North Netherlands, who could move about here more freely than elsewhere because of the greater density of population, it is at least rash to equate the spiritual life in the Antwerp congregation with that of the whole Flemish brotherhood, which had to contend with totally different conditions.

"Endeavor always to build up one another"—these were the parting words of Jacob de Rore addressed to the leaders of Flemish Mennonitism.[27] Those who are familiar with the history of the Mennonites in the earldom can see in these words the answer that directed all followers of Menno Simons to unite in order to join for a century the unequal issue with the confederated powers of church and state in the country of Flanders, deprived of its liberty of thought.

We have no other purpose than to light up this heroic struggle in order to understand better the Flemish Reformation.

Dr. A. E. Verheyden.

[26] At the same meeting they discussed the "candidate-brethren", whose cases were investigated carefully, since they wanted above all other things to keep the level of the spiritual life of the brotherhood qualitatively high (Van Vaernewijck, *Beroerlijden*, II, 341-342).

[27] Jacob de Rore, *Lieflijcke Brieven*, fol. Q.vj.v.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SWISS MENNONITE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR ADHERENCE TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH

S. F. Pannabecker

Swiss Mennonite immigrants to the United States shared directly or indirectly in all of the major periods of Mennonite immigration. In the eighteenth-century migration to Pennsylvania a small proportion came directly from Switzerland, but a larger group of Swiss refugees fled to South Germany, where they made up the bulk of the Palatinate Mennonites. In the first half of the nineteenth century occurred the greatest movement of Swiss Mennonites directly from their homeland to America. Swiss descendants were also included in the South German arrivals of this period. In the last half of the nineteenth century several Swiss congregations arrived with the Russian Mennonite immigration. The Swiss who came in most of these movements need no separate treatment, but those of the early nineteenth century who came directly from Switzerland or France represent a distinct contribution from a particular background. These are the subject of this following discussion of the Swiss immigration.

Mennonite Centers in Switzerland

The Mennonites, or more precisely their Anabaptist forebears, first arose in Switzerland. In Zurich, where the sect originated, they were practically exterminated but in the canton of Bern they persisted. Here the peculiar Anabaptist area was the Emmental.[1] Supporting themselves by dairying, farming, and fruit raising they were able to make a satisfactory living in the solitary valleys and mountain slopes. In times of disturbance some had sought safer refuge by fleeing northwest to canton Solothurn, whence most of them continued into South Germany, but some had gone to the Jura Mountains in the western territory of the Bishop of Basel.[2] Because of their economic value the Mennonites found toleration under the Catholic Bishop that was denied them under Protestant authorities.

[1] Amstutz-Tschirren, "Emmental," *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* (Weierhof, 1913), I, 577.

[2] This territory, Bishopric of Basel (best known to the Mennonites as "Bistum Basel") was ruled independently of Bern until the French Revolution. In 1815, the Congress of Vienna revised the cantonal boundaries uniting Bistum Basel with Canton Bern. This brought the refugee Mennonites again under Bernese jurisdiction. See Ernst Müller, *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, 1895), 250.

By crossing the Jura Mountains others found work and protection in French territory. Thus in 1800 there were three main centers of the Swiss Mennonites; namely, the Emmental, the Jura, and across the French border in the territory of Belfort.

The Emmental congregation centered about Langnau. The largest Jura congregation was that of Sonnenberg. In both of these regions the Mennonites were prevailingly of the Reist or moderate faction who had refused to follow the conservative leader, Jacob Ammann. In Belfort Territory the majority were of the Amish persuasion. Statistics collected in 1823 in response to the state rules for regulation of "Täufer" congregations, show a total baptized membership of 1365 in some thirty communities.[3] These regions, which had been the source of stock for the heavy American migration of the early eighteenth century, now became a source of further emigration.

Religious Restrictions

The unsatisfactory conditions which stimulated migration at a time when travel was tedious and difficult were both religious and economic. Religious causes were more pronounced in the Emmental while economic factors figured more largely in the Jura. On the religious side may be mentioned certain discriminations and the problem of military service.

The Helvetian constitution of 1798 set up under French influence recognized the right to freedom of conscience. It was followed in February of the next year by an Act of Toleration. The Act annulled all penal laws of the former governments against religious beliefs and sects, revoked all judgments against Swiss citizens on account of religious differences, and invited the free return of all Swiss, who themselves or through their parents had been banished for religious reasons.[4] These provisions were more advanced than the Bern church authorities were willing to follow and difficulties arose in the registration of births, marriages, and burials. The state church had been accustomed to keep these records, since each involved a religious ceremony and the church register was recognized by the state as the official record. Under the liberal provisions of the 1798 Constitution the Mennonites expected to have freedom in performing their own religious rites. However, they found that to receive registration requisite for the civil rights connected with birth and marriage it was necessary to

[3] Samuel Geiser, *Die Taufgesinnten-Gemeinden* (Karlsruhe, 1931), 466.

[4] Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 374.

submit to the official church ceremonies. This led the Langnau congregation to petition in 1810 for full freedom. The petition was denied.[5] Soon after, twenty-seven unbaptized children were forcibly baptized and it was ordered that in the future all Täufer children must follow the usual church procedure in baptism. This involved not only the rite itself but also attendance on the preparatory period of instruction. Police force was used to compel attendance and the Mennonites could only express a passive protest by sending the children in dirty and ragged clothes.[6]

In the Jura, the Mennonites received more lenient treatment. The Catholic government permitted that marriage be solemnized by the Mennonite pastors, that "Yes" and "No" with a handclasp be substituted for the oath and that exemption from military service be granted. To these privileges the Bern authorities agreed in 1815 when the Jura region came under Bern control.[7] Later essentially the same rights were extended to the Emmental congregations. At the same time certain limitations were imposed. Special clothes were prescribed, the state church pastors were to be free to attend Mennonite services, and copies of all instruction books were to be deposited with the state officials.[8] In 1820 and 1823 further pronouncements were made which, though not rescinding any of the privileges, imposed further restrictions. All proselyting was to cease and the favors granted were limited to members enrolled in 1823 and their descendants. The general tendency in this half century was toward toleration. It is evident that the church council desired to protect the Mennonites, though doubtless also to limit their influence. The culmination came in 1848 when under a new Swiss constitution universal suffrage and equality was secured before the law with freedom of residence, assembly, petition and occupation granted to all.

During the years when toleration hung in the balance many of the Mennonites doubtless despaired of ever receiving the religious freedom for which they hoped. Müller lists five recurrent questions which were the occasion of disagreement: the baptism of children, religious instruction, the solemnizing of marriages, the taking of oaths and the bearing of arms.[9] These in themselves, in view of the growing spirit of tolerance, would probably not have been sufficient to cause home-loving Swiss to cross the ocean and settle in a wilderness. That they did exert some influence on the

[5] *Ibid.*, 377.

[6] Samuel Geiser, *op. cit.*, 463.

[7] *Ibid.*, 495.

[8] *Ibid.*, 464.

[9] Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 383-384.

decision here is clear from letters of emigrants sent back to relatives in the homeland extolling specifically the unhindered exercise of religion in the new country and the freedom from military service.

Economic Restrictions

It was economic causes that were most insistent in bringing about the Swiss Mennonite emigration of the early nineteenth century. They were related to religious conditions in that persecution had driven the harassed people to unfertile soil, where economic factors could operate. This is most apparent in the Jura, which supplied the greater part of the emigrants. Emmental refugees had sought safety in these mountainous regions of the Bishopric of Basel as early as the sixteenth century. Such years as 1670 and 1690 brought unusually large numbers; the high point of migration was reached in 1730.[10]

Peaceful residence of the Jura settlers was repeatedly in jeopardy from two sources. The Bern authorities sought to have the refugees returned to their home districts and the local populace clamored for their ejection as undesirables. To the Bern authorities the Archbishop of Basel agreed in principle, but being Catholic he found little inclination actually to cooperate with his Protestant neighbors. Thus the decisions were never seriously enforced and the Mennonites remained on their stony hillsides. The local populace was harder to appease. During the first half of the eighteenth century repeated accusations were made by various communities against the foreign settlers. It was charged that they increased the cost of living by buying up the hay so that none was left for the natives, that they cultivated so much land that the community pastures were injured, that they used such quantities of wood for cheesemaking that the forests suffered, that they occupied dwellings the natives needed and that by bringing their cows from the outside they injured the local market.[11] In response an order was issued in 1731 directing the Anabaptists to leave at the expiration of their rent contracts, which caused great consternation in the Täufer communities.[12] But the edict was not enforced, because the landlords came to the rescue. These insisted that the Mennonite farmer-weavers brought money into the country, cultivated the land industriously, visited no taverns and gave no occasion for com-

10 Samuel Geiser, *op. cit.*, 446.

11 Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 240-244.

12 S. H. Baumgartner, *Brief Historical Sketches of Eight Generations* (Indianapolis, 1926), 19.

plaint, paid twice as much rent as the local people would in the same place; that without them no revenue would be earned, and that the landlords could not permit their workers to be taken from them.[13] For over thirty years the decision was in suspense while the Mennonites remained a bone of contention between the landless and the landholders. Finally in 1767 the Bishop clearly expressed himself that the Täufer were desired in the country.

> Through their steady industry in agriculture and handicraft, particularly as weavers, through their simplicity of life, through complete avoidance of luxury, tavern life and law suits, they are able to pay much higher rents than others . . . . It is much more in the interests of a sound policy that the numbers of these subjects in the state be increased as much as possible and that the immigration of so experienced and industrious farmers as the "Wiedertäufer" be favored.[14]

Although the question was settled favorably to the Mennonites, they were not allowed to live without economic restrictions. First, they were not permitted to buy land, but could only rent it. Secondly, they were limited to the higher slopes of the Jura, where land was stony and dry and suitable for little else than raising potatoes and grazing. Thirdly, they were not permitted to live in villages or rent land adjacent to villages.[15] Under these conditions they were able to exist only by the exercise of the greatest industry and frugality. Food was black bread, potatoes and milk. Butter was sold to pay the yearly rent. The long evenings and the winter periods, when snow confined the family to the house, were spent in such handiwork as spinning, weaving, cabinet-making, wood-turning and shoemaking. Farm work was done by hand with all members of the family engaged from daylight to dark. The principal product was potatoes with some oats and barley. A cow and a few goats provided milk which was made into butter and cheese.[16] In this simple manner the livelihood might have been secured but for two complications which appeared about 1800.

With toleration, the industry and wholesome life of the Mennonites brought an increase of population which could not be confined to the narrow mountain valleys. Various attempts were made to find an outlet for the excess population. Müller notes correspondence of 1783 and 1784 showing that four families had moved to France and that the Jura elders had written regarding the possibil-

13 Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 240-244.

14 *Ibid.*, 245-246.

15 A. J. Moser, "Aus dem Leben der Schweizer-Mennoniten," *Christlicher Bundesbote* (Berne, Indiana), August 1, 15, and September 1, 1885.

16 *Ibid.*

ities of settling in Holland, East Frisia, Holstein or Prussia.[17] No satisfactory solution was found to this problem at the time nor could be found before 1815 due to the continuous disturbance incident to military movements from the French Revolution to the fall of Napoleon (1789-1815). In 1815 when population pressure was acute, there began several years of famine conditions. The period 1815 to 1818 is referred to as the "theure Zeit,"[18] and 1819 as the "hunger Jahr."[19] Rents were raised and all living expenses increased, while blight ruined the potato crop. The poor who had no surplus existed on bran cakes and cabbage mixed with roots. Sickness was prevalent and all suffered.

Migration to America

Under these conditions in 1817, a Jura Mennonite, Benedict Schrag, ventured out to seek a home in America. It is recorded that he wrote a long report back to Switzerland "praising the excellencies of his new home."[20] Two years later the next group of four men set forth and soon sent back their reports. The men were impressed with the fact that though their work in the wilderness was hard the results surpassed those on the Swiss mountains. They also appreciated the "clear atmosphere of American freedom" and "prized it as a precious possession that there were no restrictions whatever by an intolerant ecclesiastical and civil power." Further the land was inexpensive and they had high hopes for making a home in the American wilderness.[21]

Such rosy reports against the dark background of the time stirred up a widespread desire to emigrate to the new world. Groups of families set forth together, in 1821 seven families, in 1822 three families, in 1824 sixteen families.[22] More followed in the next decade including many from Alsace. The year 1833 stood out as one of large emigrations, as did 1852 when a group of about 160, including twenty-five families and some single persons from the Jura congregations of Münsterberg, Sonnenberg, and Kleinthal sailed on a chartered ship.[23] During these years more left for the new

17 Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 247.

18 A. J. Moser, in *Christlicher Bundesbote,* September 1, 1885, 2.

19 Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 247.

20 A. J. Moser, *op. cit.*, 2.

21 *Ibid.*, and Peter Schneck, *Christlicher Bundesbote,* Berne, March 9, 1899.

22 A. J. Moser, *op. cit.*, 2. The same figures are given in Daniel K. Cassel, *History of the Mennonites* (Philadelphia, 1888), 306, who apparently summarizes A. J. Moser's account. The figures cannot be regarded as complete.

23 Abraham Zurflüh, *Die Reise von der Schweiz nach America.*

world than remained in the home congregations.[24] Thus between the year 1817 and 1854 there was transferred to American soil a number of Swiss Mennonites which C. H. Smith has estimated at 1200.[25] Their reasons for leaving may be summarized as, primarily, economic, and secondarily, religious, to which must be added the drawing power of glowing reports from the new world. The economic causes were found in insufficient and infertile land, increase of population, inflation and famine conditions. The religious causes were dissatisfaction over restrictions and, in particular, the fear that with rising military sentiment it would be impossible permanently to avoid the bearing of arms. A step toward such a requirement was made in 1815 when exemption from military service was conditioned on paying the expenses of a substitute.[26] The fears of some were expressed in the words of one emigrant who wrote back to his relatives, saying, "If the Täufer in Switzerland accept participation in military service, then all is lost. Their spiritual power would then be gone. There would be no further separation. All things worldly would then enter the congregations."[27]

Swiss Characteristics

Before turning to the settlements established in America, it is desirable to note the characteristics of these people in their European home. In moral character the four most conspicuous qualities were integrity, industry, frugality, and simplicity. These all had religious implications and were further enforced by the economic and social disadvantages of the time. Luxury was regarded as a sin. While not total abstainers, the men wasted no time at the inns. Simplicity found expression in dress, speech and living accommodations. Any variation from the barest essentials was liable to be interpreted as pride. Thus there were religious scruples against buttons, color in clothes, and even the use of a mirror.

As a body the group was held together not only by the fellowship ideal of the church but also by the fact that they were not accepted by the community at large. The integrity of one became the concern of all. Family troubles and all differences between

[24] Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 247.

[25] C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonites* (Berne, 1920), 241. The figure was calculated from the known number of descendants in 1920 on the assumption that the population doubled each generation.

[26] Samuel Geiser, *op. cit.*, 471-475, contains a discussion of the unsuccessful efforts of the Swiss Mennonites to maintain exemption from military service. It culminated in 1874 in the state requirement of universal service with the privilege of noncombatant service for conscientious objectors.

[27] Peter Lehmann, an elder of the Berne, Indiana, congregation, quoted in Samuel Geiser, *op. cit.*, 471.

brethren were settled by the deacons and elders. There was no recourse to law courts. The poor were cared for by the congregation from a treasury *(Armengutskasse)* which was maintained in part by the property of those members who died without heirs. It was administered by the deacons *(Armendiener.)*[28]

Meeting-houses were non-existent. In the early days Jura refugees gathered in caves where by prayer and worship they sought to fortify themselves. It was customary if possible to celebrate the Lord's Supper on these occasions.[29] This is probably the source of the custom which held over in the American settlements of holding communion services in private. Homes and barns later were used for places of worship. In fact the first Mennonite meeting-house in Switzerland was not erected until 1887,[30] over thirty years after the close of Swiss migration to America. Due to the scattered location of members and the few preachers, services were held but monthly or perhaps once in three weeks. Besides singing and prayer the service consisted in reading one or two chapters of Scripture, which were discussed passage by passage. Since the preachers were untrained laymen, selected by lot, the sermon was not profound. Singing was in one part only and in sedate measure in conformity with the general practice in European churches. Two or more parts and lively singing were regarded as inimical to Christian principles.[31]

Inner spiritual life seems to have suffered by the isolation, discriminations and the severe struggle for livelihood. All authorities testify that the first half of the nineteenth century was a time of low vitality. Though the simple, homely forms were preserved, the outer was emphasized more than the inner. There was little reference to conversion or rebirth. Missionary spirit was not evident and there was no evangelistic activity. How a spiritual revival was brought about later in Switzerland is not part of this story but it is interesting to note in passing that an American Swiss was, among others, instrumental in the awakening at the turn of the century.

The preceding discussion shows the Mennonite background of the Swiss who settled in Ohio and Indiana in the first half of the nineteenth century. Typical Mennonite qualities are the lack of

28 Samuel Geiser, *op. cit.*, 449.

29 Jacob Kroeker, "Gebet", *Mennonitisches Lexikon* II, (Weierhof, 1937), 40.

30 Samuel Geiser, "The Mennonites of Switzerland and France," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XI, (January, 1937), 60.

31 A. J. Moser, *Christlicher Bundesbote,* August 15, 1885, and Ernst Müller, *op. cit.*, 130.

interest in dogma, the emphasis upon definite moral attainments, the practice of mutual aid, the use of untrained, unpaid lay preachers, the exercise of discipline and congregational supervision, and the stand on the oath, lawsuits, and non-resistance. The church idea is clearly Mennonite—a small exclusive group, not amenable to the State but opposing it on occasion, a group separated from the world in manner of dress, in business relations, in forms of pleasure, and in marriage connections. It is noticeable that the Mennonite characteristics present in the weakest degree were those depending on an active, understanding ministry, such as thorough discipline, evangelical fervor and appreciation of inner spirit. On the other hand the Mennonite characteristics most pronounced were those conditioned by a clear-cut separation from the world such as mutual aid, non-resistance and the external forms. The evil effects of long continued persecution and discrimination were evident in that the group had been cut off from helpful contacts with contemporary religious movements and in that education had been neglected or found impossible.

Swiss Centers in America

The Swiss who immigrated to the United States between 1819 and 1855 located in five centers ranging from eastern Ohio to Missouri. The five communities were, (1) the Sonnenberg settlement in Wayne County, Ohio; (2) that in Chippewa Township of the same county, popularly called the "Chippeway" settlement; (3) the Swiss settlement on the border of Putnam and Allen Counties, Ohio; (4) that of Adams County, Indiana, and finally (5) the one in Morgan and Moniteau Counties, Missouri. These five settlements well illustrate in general the way Mennonites have located on the frontier. Settlers looked for good, cheap land with room for expansion. They grouped themselves together by the addition of new arrivals until the locality became well populated and land prices became high. Then new land farther west in the wilderness would be sought out and a new community started. New immigrants would use the older locations as resting places and then push on to the new cheaper land. Occasionally earlier arrivals found it advantageous to sell their property at a relatively high price and join the move west where a much larger farm could be secured with the amount realized. In this manner there came to be much blood relation between the different communities and of course there was a wide acquaintanceship due to similarity of interests, customs and particularly language.

Of the five communities the Sonnenberg settlement in Wayne County near Dalton, Ohio was first founded. The original Mennonites to locate there were four Swiss young men who arrived in 1819 from the Bern Jura: Peter Lehman, Isaac Sommer, Ulrich Lehman and David Kirchhofer. Additional settlers arrived so that by 1835 there were about forty families.[32] The name "Sonnenberg," applied to the community, was carried over from the Jura congregation of the same name.

The Chippewa community was started in 1826 by Swiss families from Belfort Territory and Southern Alsace in France.[33] Here also a congregation was organized.

The third settlement to be founded was one hundred and twenty-five miles farther west in what was then the southeast corner of Putnam County. Michael Neuenschwander, locating here in 1833, was the first Mennonite settler. He had come from the Jura section of Belfort Territory, France, ten years earlier and had spent the intervening time in the Chippewa community. Good reports induced others to locate in the same vicinity and by 1836 there were twenty-five families.[34] The number further increased in the next few years by immigration from Switzerland and France and by accessions from Holmes and Wayne Counties. The prevalent surnames show a close affinity with the Chippewa community and indicate a common source. A reporter in 1852 found eight hundred Mennonites in the Putnam County settlement.[35]

By 1840 new arrivals found it advantageous to go farther west for cheaper land and Adams County, Indiana, became the fourth Swiss Mennonite community. Christian and Peter Baumgartner purchased land and settled there in 1838. Their seventy-two year old father, who was a preacher, had stayed behind in Wayne County, Ohio, but followed the next year. By 1849 there were sixteen families.[36] These were further augmented in the spring of 1852 by a number of Swiss from the Emmental.[37] The approx-

[32] A. J. Moser, *Christlicher Bundesbote,* September 1, 1885, lists arrivals as follows: 1819, 4 men (presumably later started families); 1822, three families; 1824, 16 families; 1825, 1828, and 1835 "more families." On this basis forty families for the total would be reasonable. Ben Douglass, *History of Wayne County, Ohio,* gives 98 families and 258 members as the number reported for the Sonnenberg Settlement about 1875. This would check roughly with the 1835 estimate of forty families.

[33] Edmund John Hirschler, *Centenary History of the Swiss Mennonite Churches of Putnam and Allen Counties, Ohio* (Bluffton, 1937), 5, and A. J. Moser, *op. cit.*

[34] D. L. Gratz, "Historical and Genealogical Sketch of the Swiss Mennonites of Allen and Putnam Counties, Ohio," *The Ohio State Archaeological Historical Quarterly* XLIX, (July-September, 1940), 283.

[35] Report of Abraham Zurflüh in Ernst Müller, *op. cit.,* 371.

[36] Eva Sprunger, *The First Hundred Years* (Berne, 1938), 184.

[37] *Ibid.,* 5.

imately twenty families worshipped together and came to be commonly called the Baumgartner congregation. In 1852 there arrived a shipload of Swiss, mostly from Münsterberg, of whom about eighty located in Adams County, seven miles from the earlier settlers. These continued the name of their former home and were called the Münsterberg congregation. With a few additions there came to be thirty families in this congregation by 1854.

The fifth settlement was established in Missouri after the Civil War by the overflow of communities farther east. In 1866 five families from Wayne County, Ohio, settled in Morgan and Moniteau Counties between Tipton and Versailles. Four more families from the same source were added within a year. Further influx from various Mennonite congregations increased the total to thirty-five families in 1869.[38]

A second Missouri settlement was started about the same time in Hickory County. Peter S. Lehman, a preacher from the Indiana Münsterberg congregation, with his wife, moved there in 1868 and found a small but flourishing congregation already in existence. Successive years of crop failures brought discouragements so that the settlers gradually left until few Mennonites remained. In1893 Lehman returned to his old Indiana home and the Swiss congregation of Hickory County became extinct.[39]

From these Swiss communities have come seven congregations to join the General Conference of Mennonites,[40] three to join the (Old) Mennonites,[41] and various smaller groups to other connections, while one large congregation still exists independent of any wider conference relation.[42] Thus the prevailing tendency of

[38] *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Bethel Mennonite Church Near Fortuna, Mo.*, (1917), 22.

[39] Peter S. Lehmann, *Eine Kurze Chronik der Familie Lehmann* (Berne, 1914), 15.

[40] The congregations associated with the General Conference are as follows:

	Date of joining	Membership in 1946
The First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind.	1872	1313
The Bethel Church, near Fortuna, Mo.	1881	125
The Salem Church, near Dalton, Ohio	1887	227
The Ebenezer Church, near Bluffton, Ohio	1893	555
The St. John Church, near Pandora, Ohio	1893	241
The First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio	1905	498
The Grace Church, Pandora, Ohio	1905	458

[41] The Swiss congregations associated with the (Old) Mennonites are as follows:

The Zion Church, near Bluffton, Ohio	c. 1849.	
(This congregation decided in 1925 to discontinue as a separate organization and to merge with the other churches of the community. All of the members but one joined churches of the General Conference in the vicinity.)		
The Kidron Church, near Dalton, Ohio	1936	434
The Crown Hill Church, Marshallville, Ohio		174

[42] The Sonnenberg Congregation, near Dalton, 227 members.

the Swiss has been to align with the General Conference rather than with the more conservative groups. The explanation of this will be found largely in the influence of the Wadsworth school on a few leaders and the natural disposition of the Swiss to cling together. Time of course was necessary for certain adaptations.

Religious Situation Before 1860

Religious development in Swiss communities followed a pattern which was typical of Mennonites in the new country. A congregation was organized shortly after the founding of the settlement, in which practically all members participated. The congregation was served by a lay preacher from their own number who had been ordained in the old country and had accompanied them as an immigrant settler. Services were held in homes at first, as had been the custom in Switzerland. There seems to have been no objection to church buildings as such, for each congregation within a few years erected a house of worship. As would be expected of simple, frontier people these buildings were of modest appearance. As the minister's duties increased or as the first incumbent became incapacitated by age, one or more helpers were selected by lot from nominees by the congregation. Some attempt at consultation and cooperation is evidenced by a conference of all Swiss churches held in Indiana in 1866.[43] A final similarity, unfortunate, yet unavoidable, was found in the difference of opinion in the congregations over innovations. Each congregation had its divisions over such questions. In two of the cases the wounds were eventually healed and cooperation restored. In two of the cases permanent separations resulted.

In the early years Swiss Mennonite contacts with the outside, and even with other Mennonite groups, were very limited. The explanation is found in their isolation on the frontier and their language differences, also in the fact that they were common people conditioned by experience to be suspicious of non-Mennonites and so accustomed to poverty and simplicity that anything but the strictest frugality was interpreted as sinful. Reports reached them of the Pennsylvania division in 1847 and the general attitude was one of condemnation of the new party. When the Wadsworth Institute was completed, the school leaders were identified with the Oberholtzer group and judged accordingly. Besides this there was objection to the "grandeur of the Wadsworth school building and to the high German language there used."[44]

[43] *History of Salem Mennonite Church,* Manuscript. [44] *Ibid.*

The church membership was composed of God-fearing, industrious, simple people who were possessed by deep-seated religious convictions. Their characteristics were those of the Swiss forefathers,[45] brought now into an environment where, removed from most economic and social restrictions, freedom of expression was limited only by the individual's convictions and the discipline of the church. The religious situation in all the churches could be described briefly as an earnest attempt to live holy lives, judged by standards which recognized form more than spirit.

To their credit, it must be recognized that the Swiss were deeply religious. All such matters as dress, language, and business deals had religious significance. The Bible was highly honored. Daily family devotions were common, though not universal. Sunday, in particular, must be celebrated by reading the Bible and children were required to read a chapter on that day before going out to play. A sense of responsibility was inculcated in that every man was a potential candidate for the ministry. Very seldom was it that a person, once selected, failed to officiate. Worship services were well attended though the period was seldom less than two hours and travel was on foot because it was felt that horses should rest on the Sabbath. In rainy weather it was not uncommon to carry shoes and walk barefoot. Church discipline was exercised with all seriousness. A preparatory service for Communion was held on Good Friday where the eligibility of any member to participate was decided. Departure from right standards was first met with admonition, then with church action. The "Ordnungs-Gemeinde," as the church meeting for discipline was called, ruled severely on any evidence of pride, worldiness, or disobedience.[46]

The worship services of the Swiss churches were typically Mennonite. They were held usually on alternate Sundays and lasted two to four hours. The minister was untrained and without salary and officiated in the Swiss dialect. He read and discussed at least a whole chapter, following which the deacon, remaining seated, gave testimony to the sermon. Prayer books were used for prayer and singing was from the *Ausbund* in one part only. Nor was there chorister, choir or accompaniment.

The Swiss appreciated the freedom of their new home and responded by early applying for naturalization. They also voted

[45] *Supra.*

[46] This discussion of early customs as well as what follows is based on information from Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.*, P. B. Amstutz, *Geschichtliche Ereignisse der Mennoniten-Ansiedlung* (Bluffton, 1925), and conversations with older members of the Swiss congregations.

in elections and became Democrats, almost to a man. Holding office themselves was not permitted, largely because of the oath involved. The incident is related of one of the Swiss Mennonites from Putnam County, Ohio, who had learned the wagon-making trade in Cincinnati. He became a very skilled workman and incidentally picked up considerable business knowledge and writing ability. Later he was nominated for justice of the peace and elected with the votes of some of his fellow believers. Following the successful election an "Ordnungs-Gemeinde" considered the case and decided to excommunicate him despite his plea that church members helped in the election. His wife, who was a sister of the chairman and elder, boldly announced that they could put her out too if they so treated her husband. Whereupon she was also excommunicated for disrespect to church authorities. Such cases were not unusual in the early attempt to adjust religion to daily life.

It was in regard to clothes that form found its greatest expression and discipline its most frequent exercise. For the women a long, plain dress was stipulated, the material to be of somber color and without pattern. An apron was worn which was gathered on a band with long ties that went completely around and tied in front. Black, close-fitting caps were worn as a head covering. Silk caps with velvet trimming were curiously enough permitted, though they were not as common as those of cheaper material. It is recorded that one girl went without butter all summer that her mother might buy her a silk cap. Shawls were worn also but they were not allowed to have fringes. The hair was combed straight back flat on the head. Two girls who appeared for baptism with their hair parted in the middle were refused the rite until they had recombed their hair in approved fashion.

For men, the costume was about as well prescribed, with perhaps less occasion for variation. Clothes were of homespun material of a drab color. The trousers fastened at the side, in what was called a "barn-door" or "trap-door" style. Coats had no turn-down collar and the front was rounded back to the tail. Buttons were not used but rather hooks and eyes. The hat was low and broad brimmed. Beards were common but mustaches forbidden.

As time passed modifications of these forms of worship and dress took place but prior to the sixties little change had occurred. Every innovation was met with severe criticism and often church action. Moving the apron bow from front to side was a matter for consternation. The first introduction of a song at a Berne funeral in 1864 aroused sharp criticism. In 1867 two sisters had a double

wedding and to make the black wedding dresses a trifle less solemn, edged the apron ties with red thread. They were severely reprimanded for this attempt at fancy dress. The two bridegrooms, who appeared for the wedding in coats with turn-down collars and lapels were taken aside and dealt with for some time while the wedding waited. Even then the preacher who married them was called on to confess for doing it. A more grievous offense was the wearing of a watch chain. For this the offender was disciplined. Later when the same man put up a wind pump he was excommunicated.

This was religion for the Swiss Mennonite settlers in the early years—a curious application of religious zeal to concerns that were hardly worthy the attention focused upon them. At the same time more serious matters were neglected. Drink was regarded as necessary on the harvest field and was expected at weddings. A warm, personal emphasis was absent from sermons and religious life. Evangelistic efforts as well as Sunday School and missionary interest were unknown. Disruptive tendencies were present at times in the congregations due to self-interest, harsh judgment and lack of understanding.

There were those who realized the situation and labored for deeper life. David Baumgartner was one. He had entered the church as a youth in Switzerland in the usual way. He states that his own frivolous observance of the Sabbath at times caused pangs of conscience, but after election to the ministry at the age of twenty-two fuller understanding came.

> Then for the first, I saw what it meant to enter into covenant with Christ through baptism, in which one vows to live not for himself or the world but for Him who saved us from the power of Satan. Therefore we should come into a new way of life.[47]

In 1853 at the age of eighty-eight, he wrote:

> If another hundred years go by as the preceding there will be little more left than outward ceremonies and little of the life that is from God . . . . Without true repentance and change of heart, no forgiveness is promised. Because we emphasize conversion of heart, some are met who cannot bear it and report that we would hold a new doctrine.[48]

Thus there were forces within the church working for a new life.

From without, influences came also to quicken the spirit. David Baumgartner in a letter of 1849 refers to the "Tract Union Society" which he says, "distributes many good books and periodicals and

[47] *Christliches Volksblatt* (Milford Square), February 18, 1863.
[48] *Ibid.*

many thousands of Bibles."[49] It was just after the death of the aged father Baumgartner in 1853 that the Evangelicals became active in the Indiana community. Their emphasis on personal salvation appealed to some of the staid Swiss so that several families were drawn away. On the other hand it is probable that their testimony pointed the way to many who remained in the church.

Influences for Change

Before 1860 the original immigrants rather than native-born descendants exerted the preponderant influence. Primitive conditions did not promote outside contacts. Even the Civil War affected the Swiss churches but little. Among the Sonnenberg Mennonites it is recorded that there was some difference of opinion, some siding with the North and some with the South, from which "arose considerable friction."[50] From the Indiana congregation two are known to have enlisted. Others whose number is unknown were drafted but secured exemption on the payment of the three hundred dollar commutation fee.[51] In the Putnam County congregation we are informed that no one was required to go into the army.[52] This report is probably correct, for it is known that in cases where the individual was unable to raise the required sum the church assisted.

Some of the non-Mennonite Swiss escaped across the border into Canada to avoid conscription. In one case a man eligible for the draft left his farm in the care of a sixteen-year-old sister. The fact is that though most of the Swiss had been naturalized soon after arrival in this country, they were not absorbed in the community life and did not feel social responsibilities beyond their group. The war for them was something to be avoided. Once exempted, their life continued in more or less formal fashion. If the war had occurred a decade or two later it might have influenced them more; as it was the disturbance passed over without much effect.

The sixties appear to be a turning point in the history of the Swiss congregations. Two events of these years which left a permanent mark and opened the way to wider Mennonite contacts were the visits of Daniel Hege, and the opening of the Wadsworth Institute. After the sixties social contacts with the wider community began to be felt and came to exert no small force toward approximation to the environment and incidentally for association with the General Conference.

49 S. H. Baumgartner, *op. cit.*, 17.
50 *History of the Salem Church,* Manuscript.
51 Peter S. Lehmann, *op. cit.*, 15.
52 J. S. Amstutz, in the *Christlicher Bundesbote,* January 5, 1899.

Daniel Hege's Visit

Hege's tour of 1862 included the Swiss churches and affected them first in arousing interest in the church periodical. By April of 1863 there were thirty-nine Swiss subscribers for the *Christliche Volksblatt*.[53] Only five of these had subscribed before Hege's visit. In November of 1862 twenty remittances are receipted in one issue.[54] This is obviously the result of Hege's visit in October. During 1864 several letters from the new Swiss subscribers appeared in the paper. The first, dated January 28, 1863, was from a reader of the Sonnenberg congregation. It enclosed a letter written ten years previously by David Baumgartner, first preacher of the Indiana congregation to his son, David, in Wayne County.[55] The letter was of historical interest, dealing with conditions in Switzerland, and was communicated because of the interesting information. Another letter, from Peter S. Lehman, preacher in the Münsterberg congregation in Indiana, was written in view of the apparent difficulty of the General Conference to find a place of meeting that year. The letter invited the conference to meet with the Swiss churches in Indiana. It promised a good place of meeting and assured a brotherly welcome.[56]

Besides stimulating an interest in the church periodical Daniel Hege also turned attention to education and the problem of holding the youth in the church. He impressed his hearers by the report that in certain churches which he had visited there were no members under forty years of age, that in some the use of German had quite disappeared and that in others there were divisions and decay.[57] This was followed with the admonition to conduct good German schools, give the children an early training in God's Word and thus lead them to the Lord.

The strongest evidences of Hege's influence in arousing interest in education is found in the subscriptions secured for the proposed school. Two hundred and forty-three members from three congregations contributed $588.25.[58]

[53] Gathered from the lists of subscriptions acknowledged in the *Christliches Volksblatt* in all the issues preceding April 15, 1863. The first subscription was receipted August 8, 1858.

[54] *Christliches Volksblatt*, November 12, 1862.

[55] *Ibid.*, February 18, 1863.

[56] *Ibid.*, April 29, 1863.

[57] See Peter P. Lehman of Sonnenberg in *Christliches Volksblatt*, March 18, 1863.

[58]

Indiana congregation	62 members contributed	$117.00
Putnam Co., Ohio, congregation	85 members contributed	215.00
Sonnenberg, Ohio, congregation	96 members contributed	256.00

See report in *Christliches Volksblatt*, May 27, 1863. This list of subscriptions is not divided into congregations but the names permit subdivision with reasonable accuracy.

Prior to this time the Swiss congregations had had little concern for education. Frontier conditions in the early years made such training very difficult. Only one church had attempted a parochial school. This school in the Putnam County, Ohio, congregation met for a short period in 1838 in the home of the bishop, Christian Steiner.[59] Following 1840 it was conducted for a few months each year in the newly-built log church but soon died out. In the same congregation private individuals started a Sunday School in 1859 but opposition caused its suspension.[60]

The Sonnenberg church had conducted no schools but being in a school district entirely German had in time secured a German school teacher. Their difficulty was to find teachers of dependable moral qualities.[61] The other Swiss churches seem before this time to have made no serious attempts at education of the children.

The strongest impulse toward new life and alignment of the Swiss churches with the General Conference came by way of the Wadsworth Institute. Its influence was exerted through students and the effect can best be seen in the development of the churches.

The Indiana Congregations

As has been noted, the Swiss Mennonites on locating in Indiana formed two congregations about seven miles apart. The area settled first, about 1840, was near the town of Vera Cruz. That settled later, 1852-1854, was near what is now the town of Berne. Two congregations were organized, not because of incompatibility but for convenience.

The first preacher of the earlier congregation was David Baumgartner, who was seventy-two years of age when coming to America. In 1845 his son Christian was chosen by lot to assist. He served in two periods, 1845-1853 and 1866-1878. Besides these there were three other preachers, serving largely in the interval 1853-1866.[62] One, Matthias Strahm (1852-1858), became disaffected and led away a small group to form the New Menist congregation.[63] A second, Ulrich Kipfer (1852-1866), died after

[59] J. F. Moyer, *Religious Education in the Mennonite Churches comprising the Middle District Conference,* (Pandora, 1920), Manuscript, 17.

[60] *Ibid.,* 17.

[61] See above mentioned letter of Peter P. Lehman in *Christliches Volksblatt,* March 18, 1886. John S. Umble, in *Ohio Mennonite Sunday Schools* (Goshen, 1941), 259, says, "Both at Kidron and Sonnenberg the school boards employed German teachers and paid them out of public funds."

[62] Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.,* 5-7.

[63] Peter S. Lehmann, *op. cit.,* 14. Peter S. Lehmann calls them "Fröhlichianer" and says that they were attracted away by a Methodist minister. "Fröhlichianer" or "Neutäufer" were a group in Switzerland who followed Samuel Fröhlich and were reputed to be excessively emotional. See "Fröhlich, Samuel" in *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* II.

several years of service. The third, Christian Augsburger (1865-1869), became dissatisfied, like the first, and drew away a few families to organize an "Old" Mennonite congregation. It was the two Baumgartners, however, who were the mainstay of the congregation. The father gave his name to the group and served it for fourteen years, while the son actively ministered for a total of twenty years.

The group of later immigrants formed the Münsterberg congregation and brought with them an ordained elder, Peter S. Lehman, who served from 1852-1868. A second preacher, Christian Sprunger, was selected by lot and ministered actively from 1856-1886. These two were the responsible leaders of the congregation before 1870 though a third, Peter Habegger (1865-1872), served a few years.

S. F. Sprunger

In 1868 there was brought into the ministry in the Münsterberg congregation one who was destined to be the center of revitalizing activities and leader of his church for almost forty years. The man was Samuel F. Sprunger, without question the most widely known and influential of the Swiss leaders. In that year Peter S. Lehman, elder of the congregation, moved to Missouri and it was decided to select a new assistant preacher. Seventeen men were nominated and from them "Sammie" as he was called was selected by lot.[64] A mere youth, not yet twenty years of age and baptized but three years previously, he had no aspirations for the ministry and had threatened to run away if chosen. Once selected he was immediately installed and began to think seriously on the work before him. His first decision was to go away to school. Much against the advice of his friends, he left to attend the new school being opened that year at Wadsworth, Ohio. The good judgment, leadership and fearlessness which he later displayed were evident in this move.

Two and a half years were spent at the "Christliche Bildungs Anstalt" in Wadsworth—a short time to be sure, but long enough to work a great transformation. Biblical knowledge and practical Christianity were presented to him by earnest instructors whom he came to admire after the adjustment to strange dress and customs was completed. Especially did the deep religious fervor and understanding of the new professor from Germany captivate him. Thus a life time of friendship with the van der Smissen family began.

[64] Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 24.

Outwardly young Sprunger was noticeably transformed and inwardly the change was just as great as he came to a deeper realization of the place of regeneration and a life of consecration. These ideas found full emphasis in his subsequent church work.[65]

In 1870 about halfway through his course of schooling, the young preacher returned to visit his home church. Some of the difficulties which should later beset him were presaged at this time. His daughter tells graphically of the impression made:

> The time was Good Friday. As the people went to church they were anxious not only to see him, but also to hear what he had to say. But when he appeared they were totally unprepared for what they saw. He carried a Bible under his arm, something most extraordinary, and he was utterly changed in appearance. No longer did he wear his homemade coat with standup collar. His coat was too long and it didn't have the right cut. He wore a stiff white collar and a white shirt with a black stripe. And he wore a supposedly silver watch chain, a very thin thing about ten inches long that had cost him fifty cents. That really was enough excitement for one day, but more was to follow. He was asked to give testimony that day, and as we have said before, the one who gave it always remained seated. But not Sammie, he shocked the audience by standing. The congregation kept silent. It was a breathless moment. Then he astonished them again, for he no longer spoke in his mother tongue.[66] His testimony must have been of a different nature also, for he spoke on Isaiah 53. He must have sermonized a bit. It was something new to hear a student and the youth of the church enjoyed it. . . . But the old patriarchs of the church thought it sheer pride.[67]

A year later S. F. Sprunger, now graduated from the Institute, returned to take up the work to which he had been elected, only to find that he was not wanted. It was feared that he would not follow the old order and would cause the downfall of the church. They were right in the first fear, but not in the second. For he spoke of the heart and not of dress and emphasized responsibility to God rather than to rules.

Three problems were faced by the young preacher and his church at this time. It stands to the credit of S. F. Sprunger more than to that of any other man that these three problems were satisfactorily met within twenty years: first, to bring about a unification of the congregation; second, to secure a release of the church from the bondage of form; and third, to promote a more thorough appreciation and acceptance of inner religion and practical Christian service.

[65] *Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac* (Berne, Ind.), 1925, 53.

[66] He used the high German of his Wadsworth professors, not the Swiss dialect of his home community.

[67] Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 26.

Unification of the congregation

Forced out of his own church, Sprunger was invited to preach in the Baumgartner church. Many of his own young people followed him, and with the passing of time secured sufficient relaxation of the order against him that the young preacher could appear in the Münsterberg church on alternate Sundays with the regular preacher. Thus he had supporters in both churches. There came to be three groups: the Baumgartner congregation which was favorable to Sprunger, the younger element of the Münsterberg congregation also favorable to him, and the conservative element strongly opposed to him.

After the death of Christian Baumgartner in 1878 no other minister was selected.[68] Thus Sprunger became the leader of the Baumgartner congregation as well as of his own section of the Münsterberg congregation. In 1879 Sprunger's supporters erected a church in the town of Berne. This Berne church was the largest of all three and as population shifted closer to Berne and transportation became less difficult the Baumgartner congregation increasingly attended the town church. In 1886 the old building was sold and the land turned back to the original donor.

The three groups now had become two. Between the two there had also been improved relations. S. F. Sprunger was always tactful, as in urging his followers to attend services of the other ministers and in offering the new large church for funerals and special occasions when the other church was too small. Feeling was sufficiently friendly to have a union service at the 1879 dedication and to celebrate communion together in 1883. Many from both sides urged further and complete union. The step came about in 1886 when both congregations agreed to cooperate in enlarging the new church building and making it a common church home. The rededication in September of that year marked the complete unification of the once diverse congregations.[69]

Form Restrictions

During these years the problem of the place of form had also largely been solved. Sprunger made it clear from the beginning that he would stress change of heart and righteousness. His attitude toward dress was clear by his complete neglect of the question. "Knowing his attitude along that line the people

[68] *Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac* 1913, 32.
[69] Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 43.

gradually changed their styles, conforming more and more to the general style of the period."[70] In 1875 he performed the marriage ceremony for a bride dressed in a violet colored dress with a row of buttons down the front, the first woman in the congregation not to be married in a black dress with apron, cape, and cap.[71] Women began to appear in hats after the visit of Prof. van der Smissen with his wife and two daughters. In 1879 the former pastor, Peter S. Lehman, who had gone to Missouri, returned on a visit. He wore a "store suit" and was accused of great pride by the older brethren, but the movement away from the regulation style was well underway. By 1890 dress of women and men both conformed largely to customary style. So with other allied questions, such as the order of worship, the use of song leader, the taking of photographs, and the payment of a salary to the pastor; it became possible to consider such matters on their own merits without unwarranted religious connotations.

Inner Religion

The third problem, the development of inner religion and practical Christian service, was most important and was that upon which the pastor spent greatest effort. His sermons were prepared to provide food rather than criticism. The first sermon in his file, that of July 9, 1871 was on the text, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . ." (Isaiah 55:1-3).[72] It provides a marked contrast to a favorite subject of his fellow-minister, "Where there is pride, there is little chance of going to heaven."[73] So in pastoral work and in choral work which he loved, the inner significance was stressed. Beautiful harmony and accurate rhythm were a failure, he insisted, unless they carried the message of the composition.[74]

Mid-week Bible study classes were begun in the late seventies and Sunday evening services in 1881. A Sunday School had been first organized in 1869.[75] It was revived in 1874 under S. F. Sprunger's leadership but maintained independently of the church until 1886. For all of these innovations there was opposition. Some regarded them as too much like the Evangelicals, others as too worldly. Nevertheless they were continued and became recognized means of grace. Higher education was encouraged and as a result several young men went to Wadsworth through Sprunger's influence.[76] A church library was established in 1882, with the

[70] *Ibid.*, 32.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] *Ibid.*, 29.
[73] *Ibid.*, 51.
[74] *Ibid.*, 142.
[75] J. F. Moyer, *op. cit.*, 18.
[76] Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 31.

pastor as chairman of the library committee. The purpose as expressed was "to provide Christian literature and uplifting reading matter for both young and old members of the church."[77]

In the field of Christian service the church was led into activities in two important lines, missions and temperance. On Sprunger's suggestion a Women's Missionary Society was organized in 1887.[78] Sewing was done for India, China and the American Indians as well as for city missions. The struggle for temperance was more spectacular. Strong drink was not condemned by the Swiss in early days, but S. F. Sprunger took no uncertain stand from the beginning. Invited to a wedding where wine was served he spoke of the evils of intoxicating liquor. In the seventies the town of Berne with a population of four hundred was served by four thriving saloons and as time passed the situation grew worse. Those opposed to intoxicating liquor formed a Temperance Society about 1885 and we are told that "Rev. S. F. Sprunger also joined the society soon after its birth and became its very soul and impetus." [79] The same authority says, "Certainly no person in Berne has done more to create temperance sentiment than Rev. S. F. Sprunger, for nearly forty years pastor of the Mennonite church."[80] Though the Temperance Society was not permitted to hold meetings in the church, it was a group of the church men who were the life of the organization and eventually won the victory for a dry town.

The spiritual life of the church received a great impetus through the revival of 1886, the same year that the three congregations united. There was no elaborate preparation nor pressure exerted. It started when one of the young ladies attending S. F. Sprunger's Sunday School class felt the need of rebirth. She received peace of heart and one after another of her friends had the same experience. In two months time over one hundred, mostly young people, were converted.[81] This spiritual quickening marked the general acceptance by the congregation of a warm religion of the heart.

Thus in three fundamental matters there came about a transformation in the Swiss Mennonites of Indiana. Three diverse and at times antagonistic congregations were unified into one coherent body, the domination of outward forms was broken, and a spiritual religion with ideals of service was accepted. The years 1870

[77] *Ibid.*, 124.
[78] *Ibid.*, 139.
[79] Fred Rohrer, *Saloon Fight at Berne, Indiana* (Berne, 1913), 11.
[80] *Ibid.*, 10.
[81] Summarized from account of Fred Rohrer, quoted in Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 46.

to 1890 provided the foundation for this church which has since grown to be the largest in the General Conference and in many ways the most active. This account is not aimed to minimize other forces and other persons but it must be recognized that the work of Samuel F. Sprunger was central in the transformation.

Formal adherence to the General Conference came early in the seventies. This was another step brought about through the pastor's influence. The Wadsworth Institute had brought students together from the whole field covered by the General Conference. Faculty, board members and visiting ministers met the students and continually established wider contacts. Thus was Sprunger's interest in the General Conference and the district conferences under it assured.

The minutes of the General Conference record that he first attended in 1872, as delegate from the Münsterberg church with one vote.[82] Since this was but the second year of his ministry and the congregation was divided, he could not have represented the whole church. The reference is probably to that section of the Münsterberg church which followed him. The fact that he had only one vote limits the number of members represented to thirty or less. In successive conferences the number of votes credited to the Berne church show the increasing strength of his following. The figures for each conference are as follows: 1872, one vote; 1875, 3 votes; 1878, 4 votes; 1881, 6 votes; 1884, 6 votes; 1887, 11 votes.[83] The large increase in 1887 reflects the final amalgamation of all groups into one congregation, as well as the effects of the revival of 1886. By this time the Adams County, Indiana, Swiss Mennonites were united and fully supporting the General Conference.

The Missouri Congregation

As the Berne congregation was moving in the direction outlined, similar influences were working on the other Swiss Mennonites. The second congregation to join the General Conference was that from the young settlement in Missouri. The situation here differed from the other Swiss communities in that the settlement was made comparatively late (1867-70) by second generation Swiss and consisted of diverse elements from ten or more different communities.[84] Agreement was formally made by a decision of

82 *Verhandlungen der Allgemeinen Konferenz der Mennoniten von Nord Amerika, Erste bis Elfte Sitzung* (Berne, Ind., 1887), 33.

83 For these figures note *Ibid.*, 33, 42, 73, 81, 92, 101, for the respective years.

84 *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Bethel Mennonite Church in Morgan and Moniteau Counties, near Fortuna, Missouri,* contains biographies of all charter

the church council May 6, 1869, to permit to each one "liberty of serving God according to his custom and conscience."[85] After two years, however, differences of opinion, largely on dress, brought about a division of the congregation. The smaller group, about twenty-five members, stressing requirements of dress, formed the Mt. Zion church, and the larger group of fifty-one members formed the Bethel Church. Previous to the separation the congregation had been assisted by ministers from the Summerfield, Illinois, church belonging to the General Conference[86] and by ministers from such (Old) Mennonite congregations as the one at Elida, Ohio.[87] After the separation, the Mt. Zion church swung to closer affiliation with the (Old) Mennonites from whom most of the members had originally been drawn. The Bethel Church, whose members were largely Swiss, came to closer association with General Conference and eventually joined in 1881.[88]

Several specific reasons may be given why the Bethel congregation was drawn toward the General Conference. First is the fact that the membership, through the division of 1871, was selected on the basis of a relatively liberal-minded group. Secondly, there was the influence of the Summerfield, Illinois and Iowa leaders. Since the Bethel church had no fully ordained minister until 1879, ministers from these congregations were frequently invited for such special occasions as baptism, communion and evangelistic services. Christian Krehbiel from Summerfield so served in 1872, 1873 and 1878 and John C. Krehbiel from West Point, Iowa, in 1875. Through the invitation of these men Bethel church joined the Western District Conference in 1876 and also received an impetus in Sunday School and mission activities. The services of S. F. Sprunger in 1872 and Peter S. Lehman in 1874, 1875 and 1876 worked toward the same end. A third source of influence was the Wadsworth Institute. At the organization of the Bethel congregation in 1871, P. P. Lehman, Jr. was elected to the ministry. He chose first to take theological work and, accompanied by his brother and another young man, attended the

members living in 1917, the ministers who served the church, and a very compact history of the congregation.

[85] *Ibid.*, 22.

[86] *Ibid.*, 22. John Schmidt and Jacob Pletscher of Summerfield, Ill., officiated at the first communion and supervised organization of the church in April, 1867.

[87] *Ibid.*, 24. Communion was served in 1868 by J. M. Brenneman of Elida, Ohio; in 1869 by Henry Yoder of Livingstone County, Ill.; in 1869 by Samuel Blauch of Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

[88] *Verhandlungen der Allegmeinen Konferenz der Mennoniten*, 81.

[89] *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Bethel Mennonite Church*, 24-26. See also *Mennonitischer Friedensbote*, January 1, 1876, 2.

Wadsworth school. The next year a fourth student was added. This was the beginning of an active interest in the church educational institutions. In 1873 Lehman took up pastoral work and served the church for the next thirty-two years. The pastor's efforts for missions and a visit in 1877 of S. S. Haury, a missionary candidate and Wadsworth graduate, promoted sufficient interest that in the following year the whole church was organized as a Mission Society. In 1878 M. S. Moyer, from the Pennsylvania district, a former student, and at the time a teacher at Wadsworth, was called to teach in a parochial school.

Thus step by step, from association with General Conference leaders to adoption of new methods of work and attendance at the church school, the way led to participation in the General Conference movement.

The Sonnenberg Congregation

The third Swiss congregation to join the General Conference came from the Sonnenberg settlement. In this oldest of the Swiss communities, events had moved quite peaceably until the time of the Civil War.[90] Just what the difference was at that time is not clear but presumably it pertained to the extent to which assistance could be given military efforts by non-resistant people. At least it is clear that some cleavage of ideas was developing in the congregation.

The matter which eventually brought about disruption of the congregation was the Wadsworth Institute which opened in 1868. As the school was located but thirty miles distant, it soon drew students from the Sonnenberg settlement. Previous to this time there had been growing interest in education as shown by the response to Hege's appeal and the expressed desire for the training of Christian teachers. When the school actually appeared opposition arose from the fear that it was conducive to pride and loss of simplicity and the non-resistant faith. Particularly was there objection to the innovations in methods which the school sponsored, the use of high German and the stylish dress of students who came on visits.

The reaction against the school culminated in a congregational resolution in 1870 forbidding members to attend the Wadsworth Institute. The following year yet stricter action was taken threatening church discipline against those who would have any relations whatever with the school. The action was reiterated in 1873 when

90 The following discussion is based largely on *History of the Salem Church* (Manuscript), and personal interviews with members of the congregation.

an attempt was made to reconsider the question. Nine young men submitted a declaration favorable to the school at this time which would have brought about a division in the congregation had it not been withdrawn at the last minute. Thus there appeared a "new faction" in the church composed of younger members and those who were more open to ideas from the outside environment. In spite of the official proscription, several young men continued to attend the Wadsworth school.

The younger group, led by David Moser, started a Sunday School in 1872 in the school house and even induced the older element to cooperate for awhile. It functioned about two years and was then discontinued. In 1877 new ideas found expression in a missionary society which was organized with fifteen members. Contributions were made and addresses and essays prepared. David Moser again was leader, serving as chairman of the society. The Sunday School was attempted once more in 1882 with fair success and the church deacons were favorable enough to cooperate. It continued for about three years this time. A Library Society to provide helpful reading matter for the youth of the church was organized in 1886 and by donations of money a collection of books was procured.

The steps that led more definitely toward a break began in 1884. In September of that year a visit was paid to the Sonnenberg congregation by S. F. Sprunger. He preached in the church on Sunday morning. In the evening a devotional meeting was held in the home of one of the members who belonged to the new faction. The service was much appreciated and arrangements were made to repeat the same kind of meeting on the following Sunday evening. From this developed regular Sunday evening devotional meetings. The old faction frowned upon this innovation, interpreting it as evidence of dissatisfaction with the regular services. A crisis was reached early in 1886 when members of the catechetical class were informed that they must choose between the church and prayer meetings. Most of them joined the church but one refrained. With this situation the prayer meeting group began to consider organizing an independent congregation.

A meeting of the group was called for May 18 and, as advisers, S. F. Sprunger and C. J. van der Smissen of the former Wadsworth Institute, were invited. On the following day after considerable deliberation it was decided to organize a new congregation. This was done immediately and, at a further meeting, a minister was elected by direct vote, without using the lot. There were eighteen

charter members, to which were added six more by baptism. S. F. Sprunger remained long enough to officiate in this and to serve communion.

Plans were immediately laid to erect a simple church building. On November 28, 1886, this was dedicated by appropriate services with S. F. Sprunger in charge and C. J. van der Smissen assisting. Sixteen more members were added on this occasion, eight by baptism and eight by transfer. Thus the Salem church by the end of the year 1886 had a membership of forty and was provided with a church home.

The progressive ideas—library, missions, Sunday School and prayer meetings—which the new group had sponsored were continued and enlarged upon. Association with the General Conference was initiated in October, 1887 by entertaining the Sunday School Convention and the Annual Conference of the Western District churches. In November the congregation was represented at the Eleventh Session of the General Conference held in Pennsylvania.[91]

The Putnam and Allen County Congregation

The large congregation of Swiss Mennonites located between Bluffton and Pandora, Ohio, was the last to affiliate with the General Conference. It joined as late as 1893. It was distinguished from the Berne church which joined twenty years earlier by the fact that there was no young, trained pastor *to stimulate the move.* John Moser (1826-1903) who was chosen as preacher in 1853 and as elder in 1864, guided the church with a wise hand.[92] He was tactful and ready to accept innovations but not the one to promote unpopular moves or risk division of the congregation. The congregation differed from the Salem church which joined seven years earlier in that there was not the wide difference between the progressive and conservative elements. Hence no early action was taken by an enthusiastic, younger group but the entire congregation was held together. The development naturally required longer time.

As a matter of fact there had been two minor church divisions in earlier days but not related to the union movement. A small group followed John Thut, a minister who stressed observance of feet washing as a ceremony, and started what was known as the Zion congregation.[93] A church building was erected in 1857 and about 1868 they started association with the Ohio conference of

91 *Verhandlungen der Allgemeinen Konferenz der Mennoniten,* 101.
92 *Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac,* 1908, 22.
93 Edmund John Hirschler, *op. cit.,* 7.

the (Old) Mennonites.[94] This relationship continued until 1925 when they were again drawn into fellowship with the Swiss churches. A second division occurred when a few families followed one Christian Rupp to organize the local Reformed Mennonite Church about 1868.[95]

Conservative influences were not lacking to oppose the forward moves. After S. F. Sprunger accepted the leadership of progressives in Indiana many of the older brethren in both Putnam County and Sonnenberg opposed him strenuously. A paper was drawn up and signed by the deacons and ministers agreeing to have nothing to do with S. F. Sprunger.[96] Interest in the church papers and education aroused by Daniel Hege in 1862 seems to have largely died out in the seventies. The *Mennonitische Friedensbote*[97] for the year 1871, in its lists of subscription remittances shows only three or four names from the Putnam County community and even ten years later there are barely a half dozen.

On the other hand there were forces working in the direction of new methods. Several students attended the Wadsworth Institute. At least three[98] of them returned to work in the local church as Sunday School workers or school teachers.

Sunday Schools were attempted. The first was in the "Beech Tree" school house. According to the memory of old residents the date was about 1859.[99] It was opposed by many and apparently was in operation less than a year. A second attempt was made in the later sixties by Abraham Zurfluh. This met in the summer only, for a few years. In 1874 George Moser, a member of the Hayesville, Ohio congregation and a former Wadsworth student, who was teaching school in the community, organized a Sunday School.[100] None of these had been sanctioned by the church but rather met opposition. By 1877 it was possible to start a Sunday School in one of the two churches and the following year in the other.[101] Thus

[94] John S. Umble, *op. cit.*, 175.

[95] Edmund John Hirschler, *op. cit.*, 16.

[96] This paper is now lost. It was for many years in the possession of J. H. Tschantz of Dalton, Ohio, but after his death was destroyed along with other papers supposed to be of no value. Mrs. Tschantz explains that the paper was drawn up by Abraham Tschantz (her father-in-law) who was then secretary of the congregation and after signature was deposited with him. She examined the paper before destroying it but has forgotten the exact wording.

[97] The *Mennonitischer Friedensbote* beginning January, 1867 was a continuation of the *Christliches Volksblatt* and the organ of the General Conference. Each issue had a column acknowledging remittances from subscribers.

[98] P. C. Suter, Jonathan Amstutz, P. B. Hilty.

[99] J. F. Moyer, *op. cit.*, 21.

[100] Edmund John Hirschler, *op. cit.*, 18.

[101] *Ibid.*

by the beginning of the eighties Sunday Schools were accepted. Interest in missions was developing at the same time, so much so that a contribution of seventy-one dollars was sent to the mission treasurer of the General Conference in the last quarter of 1881.[102]

From this time on there was a gradual growth in interest in cooperative activities. Subscriptions to the church paper increased and occasional reports of church activities appeared in the *Christliche Bundesbote*.[103] In 1855 a Sunday School convention of the three Swiss churches was held in this community.[104] The convention was repeated the following year with the Wadsworth church added and continued annually until 1893 when it developed into a General Sunday School Convention for all churches of the General Conference.[105] By this series of conventions the Putnam County congregation was drawn into association with the churches of the General Conference.

Participation in conference activities having already begun, it was but natural to affiliate formally with the General Conference. This took place through two moves. A new church building, called the St. John Church, was erected at the north end of the settlement in 1889. The churches of the Middle District were invited to hold their annual conference in the new church and accepted. Members of the congregation attended the conference and were well impressed with the gathering. S. F. Sprunger, who served as chairman, took the occasion to present the value of conference work and stimulated the desire to join.

As the result of a similar invitation the General Conference session of 1893 was held in the St. John church. Shortly before conference time the congregation voted by a large majority to apply for membership.[106] Thus the large congregation of about eight hundred affiliated with the General Conference and in 1893 was represented by nine delegates with twenty-seven votes.[107]

Forces Favoring General Conference Affiliation

The preceding pages have told the story of Swiss Mennonite immigrants who arrived in the first half of the nineteenth century

102 *Christlicher Bundesbote,* February 1, 1882, 22.

103 The *Christliche Bundesbote* replaced the *Mennonitische Friedensbote* and a Western paper, *Zur Heimat,* (Summerfield, 1875), in 1882. It was thereafter the one German organ of the General Conference.

104 Complete report of the convention including a summary of the discussions appeared in the *Christliche Bundesbote,* November 15, and December 1, 1885.

105 *The Mennonite,* December, 1893, has a summary of the eight conventions preceding that date and their contributions to the church.

106 Edmund John Hirschler, *op. cit.,* 22.

107 *The Mennonite, loc. cit.*

and associated themselves with the General Conference of Mennonites in the last half of the century. It will be realized that the accomplishment of this step involved bridging a rather wide gap, for the Swiss by the force of circumstances had tended toward a conservative and exclusive pattern of life while the General Conference churches had been led in the direction of more liberal customs and broader cooperation.

The coalescing of the two was by no means a foregone conclusion. The Sonnenberg congregation, after the Salem church separated, remained independent of any conference connection until 1936 when over half broke off to join the Ohio Conference of the (Old) Mennonites.[108] Small groups had also withdrawn from each of the other settlements to link up with the (Old) Mennonites. Under different circumstances the Swiss might well have all made this same connection. The case of the Chippewa congregation, now better known as the Crown Hill congregation, illustrates this possibility. The Chippewa people were closely allied to the Putnam County settlers, both as to French source of origin and blood relationship. Consequently the two developed along parallel lines until into the nineties. Women of the Chippewa congregation were then beginning to lay aside their bonnets for the customary American hat when two of the three congregational leaders were induced to forbid this innovation. The trend was stopped, the church directed into more conservative lines and later associated with the (Old) Mennonites. Unfortunately, in the process the generation of young people just coming to maturity was largely sacrificed and many of them never united with any church.[109]

What then were the forces that brought the Swiss congregations into fellowship with the General Conference? They may be summarized under six heads: (1) the natural tendency of the Swiss to cling together; (2) their innate desire for wider fellowship; (3) the type of leadership which came to the fore; (4) the influence of the Wadsworth Institute; (5) the development brought about by the adoption of progressive forms of work; and (6) the liberalizing effects of social contacts.

First the natural tendency to cling together. Blood, acquaintanceship, religious customs and beliefs, and language were factors that tended to weld the whole group together. The steps taken by one could not but influence another and barring other forces, as

[108] John S. Umble, *op. cit.*, 264.

[109] Information regarding the Chippewa congregation from conversation with C. D. Steiner, grandson of Christian Steiner, one of the founders of the settlement.

the earliest chose conference connections so the rest would be inclined to go. Secondly, the desire for fellowship and disposition to wider contacts. Conferences, visits, traveling appealed to the Swiss. At the 1893 conference near Bluffton, Ohio, two extra railway coaches were crowded with visitors from Indiana and it was claimed not less than two thousand people attended the Sunday afternoon service.[110] Visiting ministers were welcomed and were expected to preach. Hospitality was unlimited. There was a wide interest in new acquaintances and in ferreting out possible kinship with mutual friends. Obviously such a quality promoted friendly intercourse and expanding relations.

Thirdly, the type of leadership was favorable. Without S. F. Sprunger the Indiana congregation would not have become unified and directed toward new life and new activities as it was. His vision, his courage and tact to face opposition, his tenacity of purpose and utter consecration to the cause were felt far beyond the bounds of his own congregation. John Moser in Ohio lacked Sprunger's preparation and aggressive quality but was no less open-minded, tactful and dependable. If the Sonnenberg congregation had had a leader like either of these it is possible the division there might have been avoided and the body as a whole won to progressive activities.

Fourthly, an important factor that worked more specifically for determining the direction of development, is the influence of the Wadsworth Institute. The school was in operation from 1868 to 1878, just the years when young men could be prepared for leadership in the critical period in the Swiss churches. Every Swiss congregation which adopted progressive methods between 1870 and 1895 had students at the Institute. The emphasis there placed upon prayer and rebirth, upon Sunday School work, upon missionary activity, upon trained leadership appeared in the congregations represented. Besides these more fundamental matters there also appeared such things as freedom in dress, the use of choirs and musical instruments and even Christmas trees in the churches. Some of these were directly the result of Wadsworth influence, some indirectly through the attitude of freedom toward forms which was there expressed. Without the impulse flowing from the Wadsworth Institute through students who attended there, it is an open question whether the Swiss churches would have joined the General Conference.

110 *The Bluffton News* (Bluffton, Ohio), October 26, 1893.

Fifthly, the liberalizing influence of new methods of religious activity prepared the Swiss for cooperation with the General Conference. The outstanding illustration is found in Sunday Schools. Introduced in the seventies in the face of opposition, they became accepted in the eighties. Once accepted it was an easy step to the Sunday School Convention of Swiss churches in 1885. This became an annual occurrence with the gradual addition of other congregations until it was referred to as the "Sunday School Convention of the Central District Conference" and churches were represented from New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Ontario.[111] Unpremeditatedly and almost unconsciously the Swiss were being drawn into conference activities. That which was more or less implicit became explicit in 1893 when the last Swiss congregation affiliated. Sunday Schools also served as the inspiration for new endeavors such as song and music and the fight for temperance which was stressed in the 1888 convention and those following.[112] It was in the Sunday School also that the English language first found entrance into the church. As an index in this respect the 1892 convention was the first where discussions were largely in English.[113]

Missionary interest was second only to Sunday Schools in its broadening effects. Mission societies and Sewing Societies were formed. Offerings were collected and contributed to conference activities and reports were received from conference agents, thus affecting another tie-up.

The Swiss loved music and early departed from the traditional "einstimmig" singing.[114] Sunday gatherings were popular, where after a sumptuous dinner, twenty, thirty or as many as fifty people, young and old, would spend the afternoon singing hymns. Singing schools were conducted. Men's, women's and mixed choruses were common in the eighties and were greatly fostered by conferences and conventions where host congregations vied to produce the most creditable music. Instruments entered the church with some difficulty. They were first carried in for special occasions in the eighties

111 See report of 1890 convention in *The Mennonite,* December, 1890.

112 *The Mennonite,* December, 1893.

113 *Ibid.*

114 At least two of the Swiss congregations, Sonnenberg and Berne, used the old *Ausbund* (first edition, 1564) in early years. This was augmented by a Psalm Book, the music for which though in traditional tempo had four parts. Later the *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch* (Lancaster, 1804), became popular. The first hymnal of the General Conference, *Gesangbuch zum Gottesdienstlichen und häuslichen Gebrauch in Mennoniten Gemeinden* (Philadelphia, 1873), does not seem to have been used much among the Swiss. The *Gesangbuch mit Noten* (Berne, Ind., 1890) was selected by a General Conference committee which was largely Swiss. The hymns were the finest standard hymns, with musical notation in four parts. The book came into widespread use and went through fifteen editions.

but were not allowed by congregational decision until the close of the century.

Finally, the liberalizing effects of increasing social contacts promoted a development parallel to the religious evolution and not unrelated to it. The original Swiss settlements were in the wilderness but as population grew they came to be surrounded by non-Mennonite settlers. With the setting up of political units and growth of towns, political, educational and commercial contacts became unavoidable. As pointed out earlier the Swiss became naturalized and voted in elections. They went farther. Abraham Zurfluh, an educated immigrant, taught five winters in the public schools and served many years as a school officer.[115] It was in such educational work that the easiest transition to public service was made. Mr. Zurfluh represented the common viewpoint at this stage in that "from choice as well as from religious motives, he never consented to accept any public office, except in the line of education."[116] Christian U. Amstutz, who about 1880 served as township trustee as well as twelve years on the school board, was one of the first to step farther into the political field. From this time on Swiss Mennonites increasingly served in local political capacities. About the turn of the century the son of the township trustee was mayor of the town of Bluffton.

At the same time the Swiss were entering the field of business. One of the first in Bluffton was the hardware firm of Lugibihl and Diller which opened in 1872[117] and another about 1880 when Althaus and Oberly purchased a planing mill out in the "settlement" and moved it into town. In the Indiana community Swiss Mennonites opened business places about the same time beginning with a general store in 1872.[118] Mennonites in the beginning preferred dealing in the substantial necessities of life such as those suggested above. As late as 1888 Sprunger, Lehman and Co. of Berne turned over their limited stock of plain ladies' hats to a non-Mennonite who thereupon started a millinery store.[119] Early in the same decade a Mennonite photographer was denied communion until he should repent and give up his "picture gallery."[120] As a matter of fact the church repented before the photographer did and rescinded the action in 1889, which is another indication of changing ideas.

115 Miller and Baxter, *History of Allen County, Ohio, and Representative Citizens*, 505.

116 *Ibid.*

117 *Ibid.*, 660.

118 C. A. Neuenschwander and John J. Hirschy, see the *Berne Witness* (Berne, Ind., 1896), September 4, 1906.

119 *Ibid.*

120 Eva Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 52.

The period, roughly 1870 to 1890, can be recognized as the time when the Swiss Mennonites were introduced to society. Concurrent with the political and business phases were other social contacts. Town residence and the use of English broke the settlement and town separation. Swiss residents became involved in cooperative activities with other good people of the town. The Berne Temperance Society with its fight against the evil of intemperance was such an activity. An illustration from the Bluffton life is the Township Sunday School Convention of 1893 in which three Mennonites participated.[121] The local high school began to attract Swiss students.[122] With and from such preliminary cooperation in religious and moral enterprises grew cooperation in such cultural projects as literary societies[123] and clubs.

Correlation of Social and Religious Development

The particular question under discussion in this article is the adherence of the Swiss Mennonites to the General Conference of Mennonites but it becomes evident that such adherence is but one step in a religious development which in turn is part of a larger social movement. A comparison of developments in business, public service, social and religious lines will illustrate the point. It will be found that each line of development from the Civil War to the end of the century can be divided into three well-marked periods and that these periods roughly coincide. From the social viewpoint the periods are characterized respectively by separation from the wider community, transition to the community and acceptance of the community. The dates of these three periods may vary in different localities but for the Berne, Indiana, and Bluffton, Ohio, communities they agree roughly. Since one period fades out into another the division lines can not be dated exactly. The dates here chosen are 1875 and 1895 for the beginning and ending of the second period but they could about as consistently be dated at 1870 and 1890.

The chart on the following page summarizes the kinds of activities characteristic of the three periods in each of the four

121 The Bluffton News, November 2, 1893, says C. D. Amstutz delivered an "excellent paper" on "How to Create Enthusiasm in the Sunday School," and also lists J. E. Lugibill and D. S. Beeshy on the program.

122 John Bixel graduated in 1889, engaged in teaching for eight years, then in the grocery business and later became the town's first Mennonite banker. See Miller and Baxter, *op. cit.*, 720.

123 The Irving Literary Society was organized by a group of Bluffton "intelligentsia" in 1893 in which two Mennonites were charter members. See *The Bluffton News*, October 12, 1893.

CHART OF THE ENTRANCE OF SWISS MENNONITES INTO SOCIETY

Business Enterprises	*Public Service*	*Social Contacts*	*Religious Expression*
	First Period 1860 to 1875 Separation		
Lumber stock, grain blacksmithing in the settlement	Teaching, school board	Settlement and town separated. Swiss language used.	Preliminary introduction against opposi- tion of Sunday Schools Missions Part Singing
	Second Period 1875 to 1895 Transition		
Hardware, dry goods, machinery repairing in the town	Local offiices as Township trustee Treasurer	Beginning of Town residence English parallel with Swiss High school education Outside marriages Participation in Temperance Society and Union Sunday school meetings.	Dress restrictions removed Religion of the spirit empha- sized. Choirs accepted Sunday school conventions District conferences Participation in General Confer- ence.
	Third Period 1895 on Acceptance		
Jewelry Photography Banking Millinery Manufacturing	County and state offices Higher local offices as mayor	Enter cultural activities Literary societies Clubs	Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavor Salaried ministers Musical instru- ments in the church English displaces German

lines of development. It will be noted that the type of activity varies with each period. In the first period, consistent with a relative separation from the wider community, business enterprises were located in the settlement and limited to such lines as were closely related to agriculture. Public offices were not accepted with the possible exception of those related to education. In the second period, that of transition, business enterprises include the handling of staple goods necessary for a type of life somewhat more advanced than that of the day of homespun clothes. Since these goods came

from the outside an inevitable social contact was made and the town became a better location. As might be expected from somewhat closer social relations, public offices of local and lower grade became acceptable. The development in religious activities during these two periods has been discussed, and we have seen the accomplishment of that closer alliance with the outside represented by association with the General Conference.

If the story were carried on through the nineties and into the twentieth century additional steps would be found in each of the lines discussed. In business some enterprises which previously were not compatible came to be accepted, as for instance, millinery[124] and jewelry.[125] In politics, higher offices were accepted, and the legal profession entered.[126]

There were further changes in religious activities and customs. Christian Endeavor Societies were organized which involved a wider fellowship than ordinary conference activities. Musical instruments were introduced. The minister began to receive remuneration and selection by lot disappeared. English preaching was started soon after 1900 and by the time of the World War German sermons were largely discontinued.

Extent of Modification

How thoroughly had these changes affected the whole Mennonite community and how far had they modified traditional Mennonite views?

Regarding the first part of the question the observations of a writer in 1899 are pertinent. In Bluffton there were "over a dozen Mennonite families engaged in such business as Dry Goods, Grocery, Clothing, Planing Mill, Clock and Jewelry Store, and Drugs."[127] He estimates also that thirty families lived in the town of Pandora. If this is correct, possibly forty-five out of five hundren families lived in town. It was not a large proportion that had moved to town. Fewer yet had become involved in politics or had

[124] Berne Millinery Co., established in 1893 by Abraham Lehman and sister; *Berne Witness,* September 4, 1906.

[125] David Bixler, the pioneer jeweler of Berne, Indiana, started business as clock and watch repairman in 1872 and some time later added a line of jewelry. Swiss Mennonites started a jewelry business in Bluffton in the early nineties.

[126] Cyrus Locher, born in the Swiss settlement west of Bluffton, Ohio, later moved to Cleveland, served as prosecuting attorney and was appointed United States senator to fill an unexpired term. He died in 1929 and lies buried in the Swiss Mennonite church yard near the place of his birth. B. F. Welty, of the same settlement, graduated from the Law School of the University of Michigan and opened practice in Lima, Ohio, in 1896. He came to some prominence in local Democratic politics.

[127] J. S. Amstutz, "Unsere Mennoniten Gemeinde," *Christlicher Bundesbote,* January 5, 1899.

married outside the church. It is significant, however, that it was possible to do these things without incurring the censure of the church. To this extent social changes were approved.

On the other hand the Swiss Mennonites remained essentially rural minded. Their church buildings in 1900 with the one exception of the Berne church were located in the country. Church reports to the conference periodicals included statements about the weather and the crops and the seasons so naturally that it obviously was part of the mental background. Even the town-dwellers' life was not far from the rural.

The Swiss were proud of their Mennonite heritage and way of life. The simplicity, economy and industry of their forebears were still fundamental traits. They compared their well-kept, productive farms with those of the neighboring "Yankees" and felt a sense of superiority. So also for their solid German hymns, literature and even language. Such primary doctrines as baptism of believers, non-resistance, and opposition to the oath were stoutly maintained. In spite of superficial changes in dress and customs the Swiss were Mennonite at heart.

Two points of modification may be noted. The first, which was bound to have further fruit, was that the edge had been taken off the idea of separation. Non-conformity to the world was still accepted as a doctrine but practically its effectiveness in regulating conduct was somewhat vitiated by the change in conditions. No persecution was present to throw the distinction between the righteous and the world into sharp relief. Clothes no longer marked the believer as peculiar. Most of the customs that clashed with society had been softened or eliminated. Occupation and education brought the Mennonites increasingly into contact with other churches and the world on an equal basis, while intermarriage, when it did occur, broke down the last conception of barrier, at least of those involved. With the acceptance of wider limits of conduct by the church, the occasions for the use of church discipline decreased. The "Ordnungs-Gemeinde" lost its essential nature and disappeared.

If there was a loss in the distinctness of outward marks of separation from the world there was a gain in the inner interpretation of religion. The original Anabaptist had possessed two qualities, an evangelical spirit and a whole-hearted acceptance of the Word of God. Three hundred years of oppression had suppressed his outward manifestation of the evangelical spirit but had committed him the more thoroughly to inner acceptance of the Word of God. With external pressure removed in the American

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atmosphere the way was opened for a resurgence of what had once been a primary quality. It was because missions and evangelism were supported by appeals to Scripture that they won out. Once accepted they paved the way for other interests. Sunday Schools were approved because they were found to be positive factors in promoting the evangelical spirit, and the same is true of education. Credit can be given the American environment for bringing about an emphasis on inner religion which was potential in the traditional Mennonite character.

THE NOVELS OF HANS HARDER AND PETER EPP

ELIZABETH HORSCH BENDER

A. HANS HARDER

In Wologdas weissen Wäldern: Ein Buch aus dem bolschewistischen Bann, Hans Harder Verlag, Altona-Elbe. (1934) Pseudonym Alexander Scwarz. Pp. 224.

Das Dorf an der Wolga: Ein deutsches Leben in Russland. J. F. Steinkopf, Stuttgart (1937), Pp. 307.

Das sibirische Tor: Vier Jahre Orenburger Zivilgefangenschaft, 1914-1918. J. F. Steinkopf, Stuttgart (1939), Pp. 327.

Die Hungerbrüder, Verlegt bei Eugen Salzer, Heilbronn, 1938, Pp. 118.

Of all the disastrous events of the past three decades none has been of more personal concern to the Mennonites of America than the misfortune of their brethren in Russia. Their own first-hand accounts of their experiences of these events—World War I, the Revolution, the Bolshevik rule with its ideology of materialistic atheism and its policy of collectivization; the liquidation of the "kulaks," among whom the colonists were reckoned; the great famine, thought by many observers to have been permitted to reach starvation proportions in order to hasten the liquidation of obstructionist peasants—have always been received with an active sympathy.

Some of the most graphic accounts of these disastrous years are those in fictional form; the most popular of the fictional works are those by Hans Harder. Mr. Harder is himself a refugee from Russia, having escaped to Germany in 1920. His writings therefore take on an autobiographical character that gives them the freshness and directness of a personal cause. Before he began to write, however, Mr. Harder changed his religious affiliation from Mennonite to Reformed, being since the early nineteen-thirties a member of the Reformed State church in Prussia, and ultimately a supporter of the "Bekenntniss-Kirche." He is now a Professor of Sociology and Religion in Barmen.

Of the four fictional works by Mr. Harder accessible to Americans (he has written others since 1938 which are not accessible), the earliest was *In Wologras weissen Wäldern,* published presumably in 1934, under the pseudonym of Alexander Schwarz. The author's avowed purpose in writing this book was to bring before

the world, in particular before Germany, the plight of the hundreds of thousands of political exiles, a large number of whom were German colonists, in the vast forests of the Russian North. In spite of its propagandist design—and it is certainly justifiable propaganda—the narrative, told in the first person, is truthful and compelling. The reader follows with tense interest, sympathy, and indignation the experiences of a group of these exiled German-speaking colonists, who become acquainted through sharing the miseries of a crowded, cold box-car on the interminable journey north from South Russia. We follow them as individuals as well as a group on the gruelling march through weary days of snow; through the ruthless exploitation of these "slave laborers" as they work long hours in inadequate clothing and on starvation rations; through sickness brought on by the deficiencies in the diet; through the exchange of every article of clothing except the rags they are wearing for a few pounds of flour; through the disproportionate joy caused by the coming of parcels of food from Germany, or the depression when these parcels failed to arrive; through the pitiful efforts of parents to care for their small children; through their courageous attack upon the problems of subsistence in the face of a steady decline in physical stamina, and their moral resistance to the brutalizing effect of this kind of life on character. Credit for the preservation of their integrity goes largely to the three ministers among them: the priest of the Orthodox Church, an innocent, gentle character; the Lutheran pastor, who is accidentally killed after a few months in the camp; and especially the aged Mennonite preacher, who though unschooled is strong in spiritual resources. In the hardships of their life the grays of denominational differences disappear; instead we find the stark black-and-white experience of finding God or violently rejecting Him. Racial and national distinctions likewise break down.

The story is presented with a forcefulness and apparent fidelity to fact that surmount its frankly propagandist design. In a minor sense it may be considered a Mennonite novel, for the group of exiles whose character is so sympathetically drawn is made up largely of Mennonites. Especially the aged Mennonite preacher, Ohm Peters, is sharply and admirably sketched. The author must have drawn from his own experience of Mennonite life in Russia for this character. The Mennonite reader enjoys these aspects of the book. But it is doubtful whether the non-Mennonite reader would be aware of the identity of the group. The Mennonite aspect is entirely subordinated to the fact that they are Germans, whose achievements and contributions as pioneers Russia is now repudiat-

ing with violence. Certainly there is nowhere in the book any mention of religious peculiarities, such as, for example, non-resistance. Whereas the author finds the breakdown of national differences and identities regrettable, he finds a similar breakdown in religious identity a positive good; to the author national identity seems important, religious identity merely incidental. The greatest value of the book lies in its challenging and most successful presentation of the case of the slave laborer in the Russian North; its secondary value lies in its character study of the Mennonite colonist in Russia.

The second novel by Hans Harder is *Das Dorf an der Wolga.* It has been published in at least two editions, and excerpts from it have been used as a reader in German schools. In its main theme it is a character-development novel showing the growth of its main character from a naive acceptance of the pattern of life of the German colonist in Russia, through the unsettling experience of university life in Moscow, to the final clarification of his personality as a true German. To the American reader this theme is, however, entirely overshadowed by the author's picture of life in the German-speaking colonies, particularly the Mennonite colonies, over a period of thirty years, from the settled, well-established patterns before 1914, through all the changes produced by events since that time, up to their final disintegration and dissolution.

The story begins with the childhood experience of Peter Born in a thriving Mennonite colony on the Volga in the gouvernement of Samara. Peter grows up in the secure and ordered life of the stolid Mennonite family, which in turn is centered in the self-contained community. Only his grandmother remembers that their roots are in Prussia; she awakens in him a romantic love for Prussia. From this secluded life he is sent to a secondary school in Simbirsk and then to a university in Moscow. Here he comes in direct contact with the native culture of Russia, and its soft feminine type of personality. His being German in descent, culture, and language, but Russian by citizenship naturally creates a troubling conflict of loyalties in him. This conflict, however, is resolved by the course of the events which follow. His education is disrupted by World War I, in which he serves in the medical or sanitary corps. One of his most distasteful tasks is the evacuation of German colonists from the Ukraine when it is feared that the German Army is about to invade that region.

After the Revolution Peter is compelled to join the White Army, and spends three exhausting years in Siberia, part of the

time in Kolchak's famous march, part of the time in prison, and the rest in the flight back to his home. He finds that during these three years the Bolshevik government has greatly weakened the German colonies by extortionate levies upon their crops and material resources, so that there are no reserves left to combat the great famine which follows. All of his family have been the victims of starvation, either directly or from the diseases brought on by the famine. American aid has come just too late to save his little sister Lili. Peter begins again on the home farm under very severe handicaps. After three years of dogged perseverance he is marked for exile to the forests of the North, to which the leaders of the colony have already been banished. He then flees to Germany and arrives at Elbing, Prussia, his ancestral home, sick and exhausted. His dearest wish is to remain there, and make his living as a German among Germans, but though the people are kind to him, he finds this impossible because of the great amount of unemployment in Germany, as well as the apparent indifference of the Germans to his fate. As the story ends, he is in Hamburg at the gate of the New World, to begin again his search for a bit of land in which to strike roots.

The frankly propagandist quality of the book is apparent. It is an appeal to Germany for concrete assistance, material and political, for fellow-Germans in Russia, and this element of the story no doubt contributed to its popularity in Nazi Germany with its emphasis on *Auslandsdeutschtum*. There is, however, a basic misrepresentation in this. Harder's colonists are politically conscious Germans, interested in maintaining the German language and culture out of loyalty to the Prussian fatherland, whereas there is every reason to believe that the actual colonists sought to remain German simply because they wished to remain Mennonite. They retained practically no connections with even the Mennonites in Germany. Their cultural superiority to their Russian neighbors seemed to fortify them against Russian influences and thus intensified their culture, which was incidentally German. The isolating factor was religious and not political. Harder's misconception on this point probably accounts also for the self-pity he puts into his colonists with their claim that they had to win their land anew repeatedly with sweat and blood, which was not the case. The reader surmises that this is rather the author's sentiment, induced by the later, but very real, persecution by the Bolshevik government.

The Mennonite reader is disappointed by the ignoring of the fact that these are Mennonite colonists. It is barely mentioned, and then not at all in a religious sense. Mennonite doctrines are not

mentioned at all. Thus Mr. Harder makes only one reference, and that most inconspicuously, to the fact that there were any grounds but hunger for land for the migration of Mennonites to Russia; nor does he mention even indirectly that the basis for their service in the sanitary corps instead of the armed forces was their conscientious objection to war. Again when American help reaches the victims of the famine, the author fails to mention that this was a gift of the Mennonites to their fellow-Mennonites in Russia. In their exaggerated, sentimental attachment to Prussia, Mr. Harder's colonists overlook the highly significant fact that they had been only so-journers there too, having fled from Holland for reasons of conscience, and that by descent they are really Dutch and Frisian, and not Prussian at all. These apparent concessions to Nazi ideology make the book fall considerably short of being the "Mennonite epos" it was called in Germany.

Yet it is in its description of life in a Mennonite colony in Russia that the value and charm of *Das Dorf an der Wolga* lies. It has probably not been surpassed in this respect. Typically Mennonite is the sense of solidarity and brotherhood in Hoffnungstal. Typical is the hesitancy—perhaps inability—of the father to speak at great length on any subject. His words are few, but to the point. Typical is the substantial and solid economic foundation of the home and village life, and the antipathy to all display. Typical is the church service, the lay minister who makes up in sincerity and earnestness what he lacks in skill and learning. Typical is the modest pride of the farmer in his contribution to the national welfare, and again typical is his indifference to fame or publicity. In matters of this kind Mr. Harder obviously writes autobiographically. The devastation brought about by the Revolution and the Communistic regime is also portrayed with the vividness of personal experience.

One hopes that the author has misinterpreted the very materialistic love of the land of his colonists. There is never a suggestion of the "stewardship" principle in possession, which has always been characteristic of Mennonites. There is no indication that they thought of using their profits for any cause beyond their own families and villages. When a fanatical group from a neighboring colony migrates to the East, the Mennonite minister exhorts his congregation to keep their feet firmly planted on the soil they have won through sweat and blood—a very poor religious foundation, indeed.

Harder's style is simple and direct. There are passages that show poetic insight and interpretation, as for instance in the horror

of the specter of Hunger stalking through the land. Occasionally the graphic quality is weakened by an annoying overuse of verbs of action, as in "Er griff nach dem Gesangbuch," meaning he picked it up; or "Er warf sich in die Kleider" or "in den Stuhl"; or "Er kugelte mit den Augen." The epigrammatic quality of the speech of the colonists comes sometimes dangerously near being "wise-cracking" witticism.

Mr. Harder's third book, *Die Hungerbrüder,* is a short symbolic narrative. A German-speaking colonist, his wife and their two young sons, caught in the famine, start out on a long trek from Volhynia, across the vast spaces of Russia, to Harbin in the quest of bread, with a few necessities packed into a little wagon drawn by their last poor horse.

After thirteen months of exhausting journeying the father is imprisoned in Siberia and in consequence dies and is buried along the way. The mother and her two sons continue, very sparingly using their provisions and trading for food all the other "necessities" they have brought except what they are actually wearing. Wraithlike figures pass over the scene, each giving some aid, material or spiritual, to the harassed mother and cold and hungry children. At the Amur they sell the last of their possessions, the half-starved horse that has carried them across Russia. In Manchuria the mother dies of tuberculosis; the two boys continue their march, ragged and dirty and always hungry, but always responsible. Their journey ends when they are picked up by a committee for refugees and sent to the refugee colonies in South America.

The unpretentious little book is artistically the best of Mr. Harder's writings. The political propaganda is hardly apparent, concealed as it is by the greater interest in the symbolism of the characters. Though the style suffers somewhat from the overuse of verbs of action, it is in general well suited to this type of narrative. It is a book that fascinates through its successful appeal to the reader's admiring sympathy for the pluck and self-reliance of these victims of the famine. The Mennonite reader notes the omission of any mention of Mennonites in connection with the colonies in South America. The emphasis is again on their being German. The rescue of the Mennonite refugees from Manchuria and their transport to South America, for instance, was an enterprise of the Mennonites of North America in 1930-32. It was an historical event of great importance, in which with the help of the Nansen Office the Mennonite Central Committee carried full responsibility. This could at least have been mentioned, but the author is not interested.

The subject of *Das sibirische Tor* is the four-year exile of the 25,000 German citizens found in European Russia at the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. The main character, Gerhard Harms, with the small company of Germans in his group, may be considered as representing all of these exiles. Harms is taken from his thriving business in a town on the Volga, near a Mennonite settlement, to the regret of all who knew him, both Russian and colonist; for it is quite clear that his business will not survive. For a while the Germans are quartered on a German-speaking (Mennonite) colony. Here they fare relatively well, for there is room and food and cleanliness; but the depression accompanying the uncertain future, the dependence of these independent men on others and the absence of purposeful employment, must always be combatted, to say nothing of the parsimoniousness and narrowness of the colonists. Trouble begins when the exiles are ordered to go into the neighboring Bashkir villages where the standards of living are only half-civilized and vermin and filth add to the discomfort. The threat of serious incidents is always imminent. There is real difficulty when Weber, a scientist, in distraught play, fatally shoots the rosy-cheeked daughter of the village leader. The children in the German group, among them the two sons of Harms, cause some difficulty by their discourtesy to the natives. In incidents of this kind, the author is not entirely successful in keeping the non-German reader's sympathies with the exiles; in the total picture however their misfortunes stir the sympathy which we normally have for any minority thus caught by circumstances for which they are not at all responsible.

This book is also autobiographical, in that Mr. Harder shared four years of exile with his father at Orenburg. The case he presents here is that of the German citizens in a hostile Russia. Though self-pity is rather obvious throughout the book, in the light of the many oppressed minorities produced by the last war in German-controlled territory as well as in Allied territory the story takes on broader meaning, beyond the purpose of the author.

The negative criticisms pointed out in *Das Dorf an der Wolga* apply equally to *Das sibirische Tor.* Mennonites are depicted purely as wealthy German peasants; the speech of the exiles is too clever; the greatest depth of spiritual resources lies in their being German. It is well to remember, however, that Mr. Harder was not attempting to write a Mennonite or religious novel. As propaganda to arouse an awareness in Germany of their German brethren in Russia, it was apparently successful. In significance to a non-German, it is of far less value than the first two books.

These four books by Hans Harder have received the attention of German Mennonite reviewers. They are reviewed in *Mennonitische Blätter,* the chief organ of the Mennonites of Germany, as follows:

Vol. 81, December, 1934, p. 107, a brief unsigned review of *In Wologdas weissen Wäldern;*

Vol. 84, November, 1937, p. 83, a lengthy, very favorable review of *Das Dorf an der Wolga,* entitled "Ein Mennonitisches Epos" by Otto Schowalter;

Vol. 85, December, 1938, p. 87, a brief review of *Die Hungerbrüder,* by Otto Schowalter;

Vol. 86, September, 1939, p. 63, a review by Otto Schowalter of *Das sibirische Tor.*

Hans Harder (though no longer a Mennonite he is still one in spirit and tradition) is one of the very few Mennonites to enter into the field of imaginative writing. From a review of his four books written within a five-year period, and all using material from the Mennonite culture-group, the following conclusions may be drawn.

Mr. Harder's gift places him—though not in the first rank of novelists—in a possible second rank, which is a real achievement. The core of each of his books is a situation or series of situations rather than a plot or a character. In each book there are one or two clearly drawn characters, others are hazily sketched. All of the good qualities of his characters are inherent in their being German, in nationality rather than in personality. To a non-German reader this is a serious defect. The material used, because of its great scope and its tragic quality, has definite epic possibilities and quality, but Mr. Harder unfortunately misses a good part of it because of his emphasis on nationalism.

As "Mennonite" literature the Harder writings are disappointing. The whole distinctive Mennonite life and culture in Russia, with its historic heritage from the past, its world-wide Mennonite connections, its unique religious and ethical principles, its social and cultural problems, were at his disposal. But none of this did he see or use. These matters are rarely even mentioned, much less appropriated. The name "Mennonite" itself appears scarcely a dozen times in the four books. On the contrary, the people in his stories are all very self-consciously German, in particular Prussian. The entire problem of the author is the preservation of the German qualities of his characters. The words *Deutsch*

and *Preussisch* are repeated countless times in all conceivable connections. We are forced to conclude that Mr. Harder's interest lay entirely in the fact that they were German and hardly at all that they were Mennonite. In the description of a Mennonite church service, so realistic that it could fit none but Mennonite, the distinctive traits mentioned by the author are the absence of a cross on the building and the minister's lack of learning, rather than any doctrine or ethical practice. Mr. Harder's emphasis is on the unity of nationalism rather than the—among Mennonites at least—deeper unity of religious brotherhood. It is clear, of course, that Mr. Harder did not intend to write "Mennonite" fiction, but "German" fiction. He chose Mennonite characters apparently merely because in his mind they possessed the qualities he wished to attribute to "Prussianism." This is his privilege as an author and should not be brought as a charge against him. It is only that we Mennonites who are hoping that some day the real Mennonite novel will appear, are disappointed to find that one who has the gift, the background, and the material, did not choose to use it thus. As novels of the German colonists' life in Russia Mr. Harder's books have much merit and value, depicting as they do, with faithful realism, the daily life of these colonists in prosperity or catastrophe. Beyond this they have only transitory significance. The present reviewer therefore cannot agree with Otto Schowalter's conclusion that *Das Dorf an der Wolga* is the "Mennonite epic."

B. Peter Epp

Erlösung, Libertas Verlag, Bluffton, Ohio, U.S.A. (1930), Pp. 111

Eine Mutter, Libertas Verlag, Bluffton, Ohio, U.S.A. (1932), Pp. 519

One of the most delightful books it has been my good fortune to read in years is Dr. Peter Epp's *Eine Mutter.* It spreads for our view as in a panorama, a span of over eighty years of life in the Mennonite colonies in Russia, picturing it through the eyes of the narrator, the "mother" of the title. She follows the life, and fortunes, and character of her parents, her half-brothers and sisters, her full brothers and sisters, her nephews and nieces, her husbands (she was twice widowed), her children and grandchildren, spread as they are over the vast space of Russia as well as North America. The span covers the early period of settled, well-established patterns of life in the nearly self-contained colonies, the difficulties and upheaval of the first great emigration to America in 1870-1880,

the development of new colonies for the landless, the increasing interest in industrial life and education, the first great war, the terrible events following the Revolution, the famine, and the second great emigration of the 1920's to Canada.

There would be material here for a family trilogy like Galsworthy's. As it is, the book cannot be called a novel, for it has no form. It is told as an old woman—and what a person she is!—might tell it as she reminisces. The book has so compelling a tone of realism and truth, that it is quite safe to assume that the material is basically factual. A great part of its charm lies in that very tone, which might have been lost if the author had tried to create a conscious work of art. Perhaps it is best to permit it to ramble. A modern novelist would have found several very interesting psychological subjects, as in Peter and in David, but such treatment has no place in *Eine Mutter.*

This does not mean that the book lacks artistic qualities. The very simplicity with which the story is told gives it a luminous, poetic quality, perfectly in keeping with the personality of the lovely old woman telling the story. Her deeply religious interpretation of life gives the story as much unity as artistic design could have given it.

Eine Mutter is a thoroughly Mennonite story; not in an aggressive or self-conscious sense at all, but in the very essence of the character of the narrator. One feels the isolation of the German-speaking colonies just as clearly as in the Harder novels, and one understands the necessity for it. But the great difference lies in the fact that in the Harder novels the isolating factor in their culture and way of life is German, whereas in the Epp book it is Mennonite. In the former it comes close to being a political loyalty, in the latter it is a religious loyalty.

It is interesting to observe the changes brought about by material progress and the advance of industrial life. The poor old mother cannot understand machinery; much less does she understand the impersonal relationship between employer and employee in a modern factory. She feels that it is sinful to leave country for city life. Naively she distrusts education. One cannot always agree with her interpretation of events, good and bad. But always one loves her. The reader will certainly have a warmer regard for humanity, for having read the book. It is amazing that it has found (as far as I could determine) no recognition in American Mennonite periodicals beyond a reprint of a German review. It is now running as a continued story in the *Mennonitische Rundschau.*

In spite of some irritating misspellings and faults in punctuation, the book deserves a place in the library of every German-speaking Mennonite.

Erlösung is the title of Dr. Epp's second little volume. It is a more consciously artistic production than *Eine Mutter.* It is probably meant to be allegorical, the three important characters being symbolic of all the Mennonites living in Soviet Russia in their desire for release from a life of wretchedness for which there is no apparent reason and from which there is no escape except in death. These three characters are very clearly drawn. The mother faces life with a practical determination. She does what is to be done without reflection about its ultimate uselessness. When she is worn out by the round of work made futile by conditions during the Red occupation of her village, she lies down and dies. The father, an old Mennonite preacher, for whom the affairs of this world have never been easy, but who is a beloved leader in spiritual matters, cannot escape so easily. When his brooding reflection finds no meaning in his life, he is grateful for the violent manner in which release comes. The son is practical and cheerful and finds his way about in the most difficult situations. In fact, he is hardly aware of difficulty, until suddenly his confidence in life is destroyed and he with it.

This is also a charming little book, though in my opinion it is not the equal of the simpler *Eine Mutter.* It is sometimes repetitious and could advantageously be condensed into a disciplined short story. The manner in which the young man's confidence is destroyed is not quite convincing, and his death, if not symbolically considered, seems to have a touch of the superstitious. But these are picayune criticisms of the poetic whole of the symbolism and character portrayal.

Erlösung was reviewed by Dr. G. H. Enns in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* of April, 1935.

CONCERNING DIVORCE

A Swiss Brethren Tract on the Primacy of Loyalty to Christ and the Right to Divorce and Remarriage

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY JOHN C. WENGER

Introduction

Of the nine items in Part Two of the Swiss Brethren *Sammelband*,[1] five have already been published in English translation.[2] In the present issue of the Review is herewith presented a translation of the fifth tract of the collection, a brief treatise entitled *Von der Ehescheidung.*

The tract gives no indication of the identity of its author. It does reveal, however, that one individual wrote it: the second-last sentence reads, *mit den klugen rede ich / richten jr was ich sage.* The twofold employment of *ich* is evidence that a single individual wrote the treatise. As was noted in an earlier article,[3] a Dutch martyrologist, P. J. Twisck, 1565-1636, who, incidentally was married to a granddaughter of Menno Simons, ascribed the tract on divorce to Michael Sattler, the Swiss Brethren martyr (1527). So far as is known, no decisive evidence underlies his assertion; he probably assumed that since the first four literary pieces of the *Sammelband* related to or were written by Sattler, at least three others were also from his pen. This conjecture is entirely plausible.[4]

[1] *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XVI (April, 1942), 82-98.

[2] See the article, "Two Kinds of Obedience," in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XXI (January 1947), 18, notes 2, 3, 4, 5.

[3] *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XX (October 1946), 245.

[4] Walther Köhler reproduced an early print of our tract in his *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation,* 2. Band, 3. Heft, Verlag von Rudolf Haupt, Leipzig, 1908, 333-337. Köhler's text differs slightly from that of the *Sammelband;* its spelling is somewhat different and its title is longer: *Von der Ehescheydung auss den worten Christi Matth. 5 vnd 19. Mar. 10. Lu. 16.*

At the end of the Köhler text is printed,

Br. M. L.
M. D. xxxiij

Köhler concluded that the Swiss Brethren had made and published an epitome of Luther's "Sermon vom ehelichen Leben," 1522. But Samuel Cramer (*Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica,* V, 's-Gravenhage, 1909, 597) rejected the Köhler hypothesis. Robert Friedmann supports Cramer, stating that our tract "beyond doubt . . . emerged from Swiss Anabaptism, having nothing in common with Lutheran teachings" (M.Q.R., XVI, 2, 89). It seems best to adopt the Cramer conjecture that Br. M. L. is a typographical error for Br. M. S. (Bruder Michael Sattler). This is of course merely a conjecture, howbeit a plausible one.

To enable the reader to examine the German of the two editions of the tract the following selections are herewith reproduced:

Following are the points the author makes in the course of his brief discussion: (1) Monogamy for life was God's original plan for the human race. (2) Moses permitted divorce for comparatively trivial reasons. (3) Jesus restored the original *Ordnung* of God. (4) Jesus permitted divorce and remarriage for only one reason: if the spiritual bond of marriage has already been broken by marital infidelity. (5) The pronouncement of Jesus on the subject of marriage is but one illustration of Jesus' issuing a higher and more spiritual law than that of the Old Testament. (6) When married people separate for any other consideration than adultery, the subsequent marriage of either party is a violation of God's holy will. (7) If a Christian is married to an unbeliever it is to be expected that the Christian faith and life of the believer will arouse the resentment of the non-Christian, thus terminating their married life. (8) A believer's union with Christ is more meaningful and precious to him than any earthly marriage to an unbeliever. (9) If the believer has to choose between the obligations of marriage with a non-Christian and the obligation to do the will of God, it is the latter obligation which must be recognized; he should separate from the unbeliever rather than do harm to his own spiritual life. (10) A willingness thus to separate from a damaging union is a token of being a true child of God. (11) Anyone who has left his companion, except for the other's marital infidelity, and

Köhler reprint	Sammelband text
DJe phariseer versuchten Jesum jhn zu begreiffen, vnd sprachen: Ists auch recht, das sich einer von seinem weib scheyd vmb ein jetliche kleyne vrsach? Denen Christus die ordenung seins vatters fürhept vnd spricht: Handt jr nie gelesen Gen. j, ij, das der im anfang den menschen geschaffen hat, der macht, das eyn man vnnd weib sein solt, vnnd sprach: darumb wirt der mensch vatter vnd můtter verlon vnd seinem weibe anhangen, vnd werden die zwei ein fleisch.	DJe Phariseer versuchten Jesum jn zubegreiffen/vñ sprachen/Ist es auch recht/ das sich ein man scheide von seinem Weibe vmb eine jegliche kleine vrsach? Denen Christus die ordenung seines Vatters (Gene. 1. 2. Mal. 2. fürhielt vnd sprach/Habet jr nie gelesen/das/der im anfange den Menschen gemacht hat/der macht das ein man vnd weib sein solt/ Darumb wird ein Mensch Vatter vnd Mutter lassen/vnd an seinem Weib hangen/vñ werden die zwey ein fleisch sein/

Compare also the following words in the two editions, the Köhler spelling being given first, followed by the Sammelband reading in parentheses: sy (sie); sunder (sondern); zsamen (zusamen); gfügt (gefügt); nit (nicht); ziehent (ziehen); Dz (das); Moyses (Moses); jettlichen (jeglichen); antwůrt (antwortet); zů scheyden (zuscheiden); hůrei (hurerey); jmant (jemand); eebruchs (ehebruchs); hept (hebt); gsatz (gesatz); vil (viel); verfasset (verfast); gstelt (gestellet); zusamen (zsamē); abgeschidne (abgescheidne); jtzt (jetzt); on (one) [ohne]; geiste (Geist); weysst (weis); nüt (nichts).

It is evident that the Köhler text employs the older Swiss spellings while the *Sammelband* text, although printed with upright bars instead of commas or periods, exhibits spellings which resemble modern German more closely. Assuming that Sattler may have been the author, it is possible, however, that the *Sammelband* text is closer to his original German than the Swiss German of the Köhler reprint, for Sattler was a native of Breisgau, not a Swiss. But the fact remains that the authorship of our tract is still not known for certain.

married another, must as an adulterer be excluded from the church of Christ.

What is the purpose of the author? Was it to protest against a general Protestant laxity? Or was it to define more sharply the ethical implications of mixed marriages among the Brethren? Or was it a warning against carnal and hypocritical false "brethren"? It seems impossible to answer these questions with certainty. Several statements may be made with certainty, however: (1) The Brethren regarded marriage as much more significant spiritually than did Luther.[5] (2) There were in reality certain false brethren whom Michael Sattler regarded as a possible hazard to the spiritual well-being of his Swiss Brethren followers.[6] (3) The Swiss Brethren, the Dutch Mennonites and the Moravian Hutterites all had similar standards on divorce.[7] (4) The central emphasis of the tract is twofold: (a) The author places stress on the primacy of the believer's union with Christ and the resultant obligations; (b) The church must maintain Christ's New Testament standards of Christian chastity; divorce is possible only where one partner breaks the marriage bond by adultery, and all other cases of separation, no matter how advisable they may be, do not entitle either party to remarry.

Here is the text of the tract:

Concerning Divorce

The Pharisees sought to catch Jesus, saying, Is it also right for a man to separate from his wife for every small reason? To them Jesus upheld the regulation *(ordenung)* of His Father (Genesis 1, 2; Malachi 2) saying, "Have ye never read that He who made them in the beginning made the man and his wife one; therefore will a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. And the two shall be one flesh, so that they are now not two but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together shall man not put asunder." Yet the tempters were not satisfied and introduced Moses, citing his permission to separate for every displeasure *(vnlust)*, Deuteronomy 24. Christ answered them, "Moses, for your hardness of heart, permitted you to separate from your wives; but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, He who separates from his wife (saving for the cause of fornication) and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries the divorced one also commits adultery," Matthew 19.

Hence[8] we, like Christ, do not permit a man to separate from his wife except for fornication; for when Christ in Matthew 5 often saith, "But I

[5] For Luther marriage was an "eusserlich leyplich Ding, wie andere weltliche handthierung. Wie ich nu mag mit eim Heyden, Juden, Türcken, Ketzer essen, trinken, gehen, reiten, kauffen, reden, also mag ich auch mit jm Eelich werden vnd bleiben . . ."—Art. "Ehe", *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* I, 511.

[6] *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XIX, 4 (October 1945), 247f, 252.

[7] Article, "Ehescheidung," *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* I, 529f.

[8] The original treatise is not divided into paragraphs. All paragraphing is by the translator.

say unto you,"[9] he thereby annuls the Law insofar as it is grasped legalistically *(buchstabisch)* and not spiritually, Ephesians 2, Romans 10. As He is also the perfection of the Law, therefore He is the Mediator of a better Testament which hath been established upon better promises, Hebrews 8. Therefore He does away with the old divorcing, no longer permitting hardness of heart to be a valid occasion for divorce[10] but renewing the regulation of His Father, saying, "It hath not been so from the beginning, when God ordained *(geschaffen hat)* that man and wife should be one; and what God hath joined together man shall not separate." Therefore one may not separate for trifling reasons,[11] or for wrath, that is, hardness of heart, nor for displeasure, aversion *(widerwillen)*, faith or unbelief, but alone for fornication. And he who separates or permits to separate except for the one cause of fornication, and changes [companions],[12] commits adultery. And he who marries the one divorced causeth her to commit adultery, for Christ saith, "These two are one flesh." But he who cleaves to a harlot, as Paul says, sinneth against his own body and is one flesh with the harlot, I Corinthians 6. Therefore he is separated from his own flesh in that he has attached himself to the alien *(frembd)* flesh of the harlot, and his marriage is broken *(gescheiden)* for they are no more one flesh, but the fornicator has become one flesh with the harlot. Therefore the abandoned one [innocent companion] may marry whomsoever he wishes to,[13] only it must be in the Lord, I Corinthians 7, so that he may not marry among a faithless people that is without God, but among a believing people that keeps itself in God, in order that he may not apostatize with those who do not believe in God,[14] Deuteronomy 7.

Paul teaches in I Corinthians 7, If the unbelieving one doth not desire to dwell with the believer and departs, so let him depart; a sister or brother is not under bondage *(gefangen)* in such cases: but God hath called us in peace. This cannot weaken *(schwechen)* the words of Christ, nor does it contradict Him, otherwise Paul would be speaking after Moses (if hardness of heart or unbelief could permit divorce)[15] and he would be "scattering," as Christ says in Matthew 12, "He who gathereth not with me scattereth abroad," and that could not edify *(besseren)* the body of Christ. The

[9] In the Sammelband text Christ's dictum is repeated: "dann in dem das Christus spricht / Ich aber sage euch / offtmals Mat. 5. Ich aber sage euch / hebt er das gesatz auff / so viel es buchstabisch vnd nicht geistlich verfast ist."

[10] "darumb er das alt Ehescheiden auffhebt / vnnd Hertzen hertigkeit nicht mehr gelten lest / sonder erneuwert die ordnung seines Vaters / vnnd spricht / . . ."

[11] ". . . / darumb kein ringe vrsachen / zorn sachen / das ist / hertigkeit des Hertzens / . . ." The German word *ringen* means to strive. It is more probable, however, that by *ringe* the author intends *geringe,* that is, trifling or unimportant.

[12] "Vnd wer sich scheidet oder scheiden lest on [ohne] Hurerey die einig vrsach / vnnd sich verendert / der bricht die Ehe." Cf. note 21 below.

[13] ". . . / vnd mag sich das abgescheiden vermehelen / welchem sie wil / allein das es im Herren geschehe / . . ." The author uses the neuter gender for *abgescheiden* perhaps to indicate that he has in mind the abandoned companion regardless of sex. If this is correct, then the *sie* in the next phrase would also mean, *he or she.*

[14] The sense of the original is somewhat unclear: ". . . / I. Cor. 7. das es sich nicht eim abtrünnigen volck / das one Gott ist / sonder eim gleubigen / das sich in Gott haltet / vermehele / damit es nicht vom vngleubigen von Gott abgefellet werde. Deu. 7."

[15] It should be noted that the author uses *scheiden* in a twofold sense: (1) A complete severance of the marriage bond, recognized by God and permitting the remarriage of the innocent party; this obtains only when the other party has committed adultery. (2) the right to cease living together, but with absolutely no right for either party to remarry on pain of being guilty of adultery in the second union.

meaning of Paul's words depends rather on what Paul has in mind[16] in this chapter, just as he says in I Corinthians 2, "But we have the mind of Christ," and I Corinthians 7, "I think that I also have the Spirit of God." There are many reasons for the unbeliever to separate,[17] one this, the other that; yea, furthermore because unbelief hates and persecutes faith with its works,[18] just as Christ testifies in Matthew 10, "They of thine household shall be thy foes." And therefore from aversion and wrath the believer will be driven out and expelled. Nevertheless that is not a separation in God's sight[19] for they are still one flesh inasmuch as neither of them has attached his own flesh to the alien flesh of a harlot and become one flesh with the harlot. Therefore it is only fornication *(hurerey)* which can effect a divorce *(scheidet)*. He who cleaveth to the Lord is one spirit with Him, I Corinthians 6, flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone, Ephesians 5. This is a great secret, but I speak concerning Christ and His church *(Gemeine)*. For we are also the spouse and companion *(gespons vnd gemahel)* of Christ, married to Him through faith, Hosea 2, Apocalypse 19, forsaking father and mother, wife and child, and lands, and our lives, Matthew 16, 19, Luke 14, cleaving to the Lord, being one spirit with Him. But if it comes to the point where we must separate from one spouse and companion and cleave to the other, yea, either separate or do that which is wrong,[20] forsaking the love and communion of God, as well as faith, and cleave more to the earthly *(fleischlichen)*[21] companion and render greater obedience thereto than to the spiritual companion Christ, thereupon a struggle results in order that one may see whom he loves most, wife, child, lands, or his own life; and hereby is revealed who the chosen ones of God are (as Esdras[22] says, IV Esdras 16), who leave all and follow Christ, Mark 10, being ever *(altag)* under the cross; and then, or now, a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

Marriage is indeed a bond and an obligation as Paul calls it, I Corinthians 7, so that one hath not the control of his own body, but the other, and neither may depart *(abweichen)* from the other. Yet the obligation is not so strong in God's sight that the believer for the sake of the marriage must do wrong, the man rendering greater obedience to his wife, or the wife greater obedience to her husband, than to God, so that the unbeliever may remain one flesh with me. But now the spiritual marriage and obligation to Christ, yea faith, love and obedience to God (so that no creature

16 ". . . / aber es leit am verstandt nach dem sinn Pauli in diesem capitel/. . ."

17 "Es sind viel vrsachen dem vngleubigen für zuwenden sich zuscheiden / eine sonst die ander so / . . ."

18 ". . . / ja das auch der vnglaub den Glauben in seinen wercken hasset vnnd verfolget / . . ."

19 ". . . / das ist noch keine scheidung für Gott / . . ." See note 13 above.

20 "Wenn es aber dahin kompt / das wir vns scheiden müssen von eintwederen gespons vnd Gemahel / vnn dem andern anhangen / ja entweders vnrecht thun / . . ."

21 The author's term *fleischlich* is rendered uniformly *earthly;* the author is contrasting obligations to God with those which exist in the "natural order." For him there is no natural order unrelated to God; the will of God penetrates and colors all earthly relationships. And it so far supersedes all earthly obligations as sometimes not to be understandable to those less devoted to God and His will. Cf. Franklin H. Littell's observations in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XXI, 1, (January 1947).

22 The author here cites an apocryphal book which Westcott entitled, *The Apocalypse of Esdras.* The book is also sometimes called *II Esdras.* Although it has been described as "'The sublimest and most pleading" of all the Jewish apocalypses (T. Witton Davies), it was not included in the Roman Catholic canon by the Council of Trent (1545-63). Chapter XVI however is part of an appendix, supposedly of Christian, not Jewish, authorship.

can separate us from God and the love of Christ, Romans 8), takes precedence over the earthly marriage, and one ought rather forsake such earthly companion than the spiritual Companion. And by not removing the designated one from the bond of marriage we give evidence that we care more for earthly than for spiritual obligations and debts,[23] as it is written, He who loveth father or mother, wife or child, more than me, is not worthy of me, Matthew 10; yea also he who doth not hate and forsake all, even his own life, and renounce all that he hath, Luke 14.

Therefore you hear from the foundation of God's Word that hardness of heart and unbelief may not occasion divorce *(nicht scheidet)*, but only fornication, and as long as there is not a change[24] to another flesh, we declare *(sagen)* that when a man or woman separates except for fornication (that is, adultery), and takes another wife or husband, we consider *(halten)* this as adultery and the participants as not members of the body of Christ, yea, he who marries *(nimpt)* the separated one we consider a fornicator according to the words of Christ, Matthew 5, 19.

He who further divorces and will not hearken to Christ,[25] scatters abroad and knows nothing, and him we will avoid *(meiden)*[26] as faithless *(abtrünningen)*, as one who damns himself, Titus 3. To the wise I am speaking; judge ye what I say. May God give us understanding from above in all things, to the knowledge of Himself and to His glory *(preis)*. Amen.

[23] ". . . vnd solen eh den fleischlichen dann den Geistlichen Gemahel verlassen / vnn nt [*sic*] die gewisne verstreichen aus dem band der ehe / das wir mer achten flelschliche [*sic*] / dann geistliche pflicht vnnd schuldt / . . ."

[24] Cf. note 10 above. Here the author uses the substantive *verenderung;* there it was the verb *verendert.*

[25] "Wer weiter scheidet vnnd nit zufaltden worden Christi / der zerstrewet . . ."

[26] The reader should beware of associating with this term all its later connotations among the *Dutch* Mennonites. The writer seems rather to have in mind the same point as Michael Sattler mentioned in his pastoral letter which incorporated the Schleitheim Confession: "Habent acht auff alle die nicht wandlen nach der einfaltigkeit Göttlicher warheit . . . damit jederman geregieret werde vnter vns / durch die regel des Bans / vnd furohin verhüt werde der falschen Brüder vnd Schwestern zugang vnter vns."

AN ANCIENT VERSION OF OBBE PHILIPS' "CONFESSION"

Leonard Verduin

In the foreword to his study on Conrad Grebel, Dr. Bender had occasion to refer to "a codex which is in the possession of the Mennonite Church of Heubuden near Marienburg in West Prussia." (MQR, January, 1936, p. 6, note 4) A photocopy of this codex is in the Goshen library. It comprises many documents of interest to the student of the early history of Anabaptism. All are by the same hand and all are in 16th Century Dutch for, as is well-known, the Prussian Churches were of Dutch origin.

One of the most important and interesting items in the codex is an ancient version of Obbe Philips' "Belijdinge" (Confession). The readers of the Review will be interested in a few notes on this old version of Obbe's letter of repudiation.

First of all, the codex version is old, almost certainly older than any of the printed versions, as we shall indicate presently. It is too bad that when the learned Mennonite historian, Dr. S. Cramer, edited the "Belijdinge" for the *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica* he did not have access to nor knowledge of our present version: it is repeatedly superior to any and all of the three printed versions, and frequently throws an elucidating light upon the textual difficulties encountered in the "Belijdinge," some of which had Dr. Cramer floored.

For example, in the passage which relates the shameful conduct of Jan Matthijs in abducting a young girl to be his mistress, the printed versions have, unanimously, "die vercloeckte hij van hare ouders met heijlighe ende schoone woorden." But the verb "vercloeckte" (emboldened) makes no sense in the connection in which it stands: but going to the codex version we find the verb "verlockte" (enticed) instead, which renders the sentence wholly perspicuous.

The same paragraph in the codex version supplies some extra information concerning the details of the Haarlem baker's excesses: "ende sij soude sijn huisvraue sijn, ende voerde se heijmelijk mede tot Amsterdam ende brochtse op een heijmelijcke plaatse, als hij nu daar quam gaf hij voor, van groote drijvinge des Geestes, en hoe hem Godt groote dingen geopenbaart hadde" (and she was to be his wife, and conducted her secretly to Amsterdam and brought her to a secret place. Arriving there he claimed for himself

to be greatly driven by the Spirit, and that God had revealed great things to him.) All this is omitted in the printed versions. We mention this, not because it is useful to know all this of the man who did so much to disgrace the Anabaptist cause, but because we have here quite conclusive evidence that our codex version has greater antiquity than the printed versions. The passage quoted stands between a first and second occurrence of "geopenbaart hadde" and how it came to be lost is easily surmised: the typesetter (or some copyist before him) allowed his eye to leave the page at the end of the first "geopenbaart hadde" and to return to it at the end of the second, so omitting all that lay between. Later printed versions perpetuated the error.

Several of the improvements suggested by Cramer are actually found in the text before us, the pronoun "hij" on his page 134, and the punctum at the bottom of the page. But not all of Cramer's guesses were quite so fortunate. The solution proposed by him for the halting sentence complained of on page 135 becomes wholly superfluous when we see that sentence beginning with "Ten hadde" (after the analogy of the modern 'tenware'; in the 16th Century the auxiliaries 'to have' and 'to be' were still competing for supremacy). Cramer takes over without comment the printed versions' "verbeijdinge" (the act of waiting) a word which will have to yield to "verleijdinge" (the act of deceiving) as the codex has it.

Of more general interest will be some of the remarks appended to the "Belijdinge": by whom is not said, but we are safe in assuming that they reflect early opinions and attitudes. In these postscripts various traditions anent Obbe and his defection are given. One of them is "dat hij om sijn quaade wandelinge van der Gemeijnte gestraft is" (that he was censured for bad conduct). Perhaps this is due to taking in a literal sense what that ardent Mennist Peter van Ceulen said of Obbe, that to the end of his days he had lived "een ongodlijck vleijsselijck leven" (an ungodly and carnal life). But the expression is used of all excommunicated persons and means no more than "a life outside the Mennonite Church." Another incriminating testimony concerning Obbe is "dat hij met sijn Naber heeft verschil gekreegen om een stuck lands, dat is so hoog gelooпen dat Obbe Philips daarom soude hebben een eedt gedaan, en heeft daarop sijn afscheit van de Gemeente bekoomen" (that he got into a quarrel with his neighbor about a piece of land, which went so far that Obbe Philips is reported to have sworn an oath about it, and thereupon got his discharge from the Church.) We also read "Het wordt geseijt

dat Obbe Philips tweemaal van de Gemeente gekoomen is, alsoo is hij de eerste maal weeder daarbij gekoomen" (It is said that Obbe Philips was twice deposed, so he must have been received back the first time.) Here the scribe attempts to give proof for this theory of a repeated defection, by a reference to a hymn assigned to Obbe. (If this assignment is correct then we have at least one more work from the hand of "Demas" than Cramer lists.) Omitting several, we come to the last "it is said", "dat doen hij op het sterven sal gelegen hebben geseijt heeft dat hij sach eenen vuijrigen stoel in der hellen daar hij op sitten soude" (that when he was about to die he is supposed to have said that he saw a fiery chair in hell on which he was to sit).

Without going into the old debate as to the trustworthiness of Obbe's delineation of early Mennonite history, we may say that the presence of Obbe's Confession in this ancient codex, as well as the nature of the appended reports, shows that the authenticity of Obbe's work was not challenged by the early Mennonite Churches. When Peter van Ceulen called the "Belijdinge" a "partidich lasterschrift" (partisan libel) when it first appeared in printed form (thanks to a Reformed controversialist, no doubt, who saw in it excellent material with which to oppose Anabaptism) he started something, a controversy which has not died down to this day. (Both Plaupot ten Cate and the kindly Christian Sepp cling, too persistently we believe, to Peter van Ceulen's techniques in attempting to get rid of Obbe's damaging testimony.) It is better to accept the authenticity of Obbe's "Belijdinge". But that does not mean that his representations are not to be challenged. When he puts all the early Mennonites in the same category with the fanatics who staged the Münster and the Oude Clooster excesses, it is needful to remember that it was in the interest of Obbe's own integrity so to represent things. All told it is indisputable that there were Anabaptists and Anabaptists.

BOOK REVIEWS

Dr. A. L. E. Verheyden on the Mennonites in Flanders.

On my desk are four publications of Dr. A. L. E. Verheyden, a Flemish historian. They are *De Doopsgezinden te Gent* (1530-1630) reprinted from the *Bulletijn der Maatschappij voor Oudheidkunde en Geschiedenis,* 1943, pp. 97-130; *Het Brugsch Martyrologium,* (12 October 1527—7 Augustus, 1573), (Brussels, 1944), 81 pp.; *Een Episode uit de Gentsche Kerkhervorming,* Juli 1566—Febr. 1567 (from: *Rapport Bulletin van de Vereeniging voor de Geschiedenis van het Belgische Protestantisme,* 1945) and finally: *Het Gentsch Martyrologium,* 1530-1595, (Bruges, 1946, 84 pp).

In all these studies the author occupies himself with the history of our ancestors in Flanders, Belgium. His knowledge of this subject is enormous and his style is clear and easy to understand. He is well acquainted with the existing literature about Mennonite history, but the great value of his publications is that by research in the sources he is able to give us data and information which were unknown to us and by which our history in Flanders becomes in some points remarkably modified and always richly supplemented.

For example, Verheyden knows of 47 Mennonite martyrs at Bruges (Van Braght has only 28) and at Ghent 146 (Van Braght 108). From these new studies we not only learn various details about the martyrs, but also receive proof of the great extent of the Mennonite movement in Flanders. Of the 252 martyrs of the Reformation in Ghent, 146 were Mennonites, and of the 70 martyrs in Bruges, 47 were Mennonites. Of those 146 and 47 respectively 105 and 43 were punished with the severest penalty, that is, death by burning.

The movement developed mostly in the large cities. Ghent, Bruges, and especially Antwerp were important centers. But also in smaller towns like Meenen and Cortrijk Mennonites are found. They were there already in early times. In Ghent Willem Mulaer was beheaded on July 15, 1535, and in Bruges the first victim was burned to death August 20, 1538, Josyne Schriex, widow of Jacob van der Mose. She was already rebaptized in 1534 and her two infant children were not baptized. The number of the women who were executed is remarkably large.

From the studies of Dr. Verheyden we conclude that about 1538 there were in Bruges as well as in Ghent prosperous congregations which had contact with each other. What about the character of those churches? Do we find Münsterite attitudes and ideas in the years 1534-1540 in this region or do the members belong to those quiet peaceful brethren who, tolerating and suffering, had no other intention than to be faithful to their God, true even till death? We do find some traces of Münsterism: Mahieu Waghens was burned on August 15, 1538, at the Friday-market in Ghent. He thought that his fellow-baptists would change the political situation in the town, if necessary by force. This Waghens was a deacon of the church at Ghent; for want of a preacher he led the discussions and preached. A certain woman martyr appears to have visited Münster and been baptized there.

Yet it is a mistake to conclude that the whole church was in the ban of Münsterite ideas. Jan and Pieter Styaertsz were executed in the same year as the revolutionary Waghens. Their imprisonment was under horrible conditions: a pit was their abode. But they resigned themselves and

did not even grumble about the dirty food they received: it was a test sent by God. They did not seize the opportunity to escape, for when one of them became ill and the officer allowed him to go home to regain strength, he returned again, after recovering from his sickness, to his brother in the pit in order to bear with him the heavy yoke of suffering and death.

Moreover after 1540 there is no trace in Flanders of the "daad fractie" or active party as Dr. Verheyden calls it. Afterwards the Mennonites did not contribute at all to the iconoclasm that occurred; it was the Calvinists who did this. For the latter "the deed itself has an importance as a means of extension and defence; for the Mennonites the deed has a spiritual basis; it is not necessary to build up the spiritual brotherhood by means of social action, the brotherhood is based upon the community built around their theological interpretation."

Dr. Verheyden's general picture of the church in Flanders is as follows: it originated in early times, was for a brief time exposed to the danger of being influenced by the revolutionary stream, but held to peacefulness; then followed sharp persecution, at times decreasing and then suddenly very sharp; the church was consolidating itself, was strengthened and built up by the "Oudsten" (elders) who came from elsewhere, mostly from the North of Holland. The Mennonites persisted in their principle of nonresistance. In spite of everything they came courageously together. About 1573 there was in Ghent a list containing the names of the members who contributed regularly to the poor of the church. The church must have been therefore very important.

Although the Calvinists became powerful in Ghent in 1577, the Mennonite Church was able to develop so that many of the Reformed people became Mennonites. In the year 1582 the Mennonite congregation asked for its own church building: the next year the preacher Fierin Grysperre circulated letters all over the town to announce his sermons. It is evident that the Calvinists did not tolerate this boldness and many difficulties arose between the Calvinists and the Mennonites. What a great change was wrought when Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, restored the Spanish authority in Ghent in the year 1583. The congregation then came together secretly, but in the course of time it became impossible to meet, and many Mennonites left the city. For a considerable time they came together in Zomerghem, north of Ghent, but in 1630 this group also completely disappeared. The congregation of Bruges had already been ruined a long time before, after a very difficult time.

It is the great merit of Dr. Verheyden that he shows us clearly these congregations in Flanders and their religious life. We therefore await with great interest his new work, *History of Mennonitism in Flanders*. For the very reason that we are grateful for the fruit of the author's conscientious investigations of the archives, we take the liberty to offer a few critical remarks:

1. Dr. Verheyden seems to have forgotten that the word "Lutherij" in the years 1520-40 is a general indication of heresy and does not mean that those who are mentioned as being "Lutherans" must necessarily be direct followers of the German reformer. Thus, those whom we call "sacramentarians" (that is those who do not believe in the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church and have forsaken that church) are called Lutherans in the bills of indictment. This does not exclude the possibility that there were direct disciples of Luther in Bruges, but I believe that Dr. Verheyden is wrong when he speaks about a mighty stream of (genuine) Lutheranism

in Flanders. In this regard Professor Pont is right in my opinion in denying the direct influence of Luther in this region.

2. The author speaks many times of "Mennisme." I think that it is more correct to speak of "dooperschen" or "doopsgezinden" (baptist-minded). It is true that the "Mennonites" in Flanders after 1540 held the same principles as Menno Simons; the conflict with the Calvinists in Ghent about the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ shows that clearly. But Menno's direct influence in Flanders was very small. Menno himself never visited the congregations in Belgium, and the name "Mennisten" or "Mennonites" dates from a time when the churches of Flanders had already been destroyed.

3. In the two Martyrologia the author gives us many valuable details. This data would be of still greater value if the quotations from the "Bouc van den crime," the "Stadsrekeningen," and other archivalia like the Memorial Books of Ghent, were always given in the original words instead of in the paraphrases of the author.

I hope that Dr. Verheyden will accept my few minor objections and I hope also that he soon may be able to publish his history of our churches in Flanders.

Rotterdam, Netherlands. N. van der Zijpp.

B. Mabel Dunham, *Grand River*. Toronto (McClelland and Steward), 1945, 294 pp., $3.00.

Miss Dunham, the retired librarian of the Kitchener (Ontario) public library, will be remembered as the author of several other books, two of which are based on early Mennonite settlements in Waterloo County, Ontario, and consequently are of interest to Mennonites for their implications for Mennonite life and customs. These two books are *The Trail of the Conestoga* and *Toward Sodom*. In this latest book, *Grand River*, Miss Dunham has told the story of the original ownership and settlement of the Grand River Valley, in which Waterloo County lies. Since most of this valley lies outside of the Mennonite settlements in Ontario it is likely that those parts of the book which deal with the settlements in Waterloo County will be of most interest to Mennonites. There is, however, some value in having set before us the historical perspective of the whole valley so that we can see more clearly what conditions confronted our pioneer forefathers when they first entered what is now Waterloo County.

Miss Dunham traces the history of the Grand River from the earliest Indian and even legendary days. The story of the Five Nations Indians is complete. Of main interest in the Indian history is the story of the Indian chief Joseph Brant who was granted the lands "extending six miles deep on each side of the Grand River, beginning at the river's mouth on Lake Erie and continuing at that same width to its problematical source." It was from these lands that Mr. Beasley and his associates purchased what came to be known as the Beasley tract. Our Mennonite forefathers bought their lands from Mr. Beasley. Miss Dunham sketches again the story of this purchase and takes an adverse view of Mr. Beasley because of the mortgage difficulties. Miss Dunham goes on to pay a fine tribute to our Mennonite forebears who were the pioneers of Waterloo County, and most contemporary Mennonites will find the story of interest.

What is especially new in the book is the story of the settlement of Woolwich Township in Waterloo County as distinct from Waterloo township. It is a question whether this story has been told as completely anywhere else. By telling it Miss Dunham gives us a complete picture of the Mennonite settlements in Waterloo County, Ontario. For this reason all Mennonites of our generation who are historically minded will find her book of more than passing interest.

Ann Arbor, Michigan. J. B. Cressman.

John Horsch in 1922